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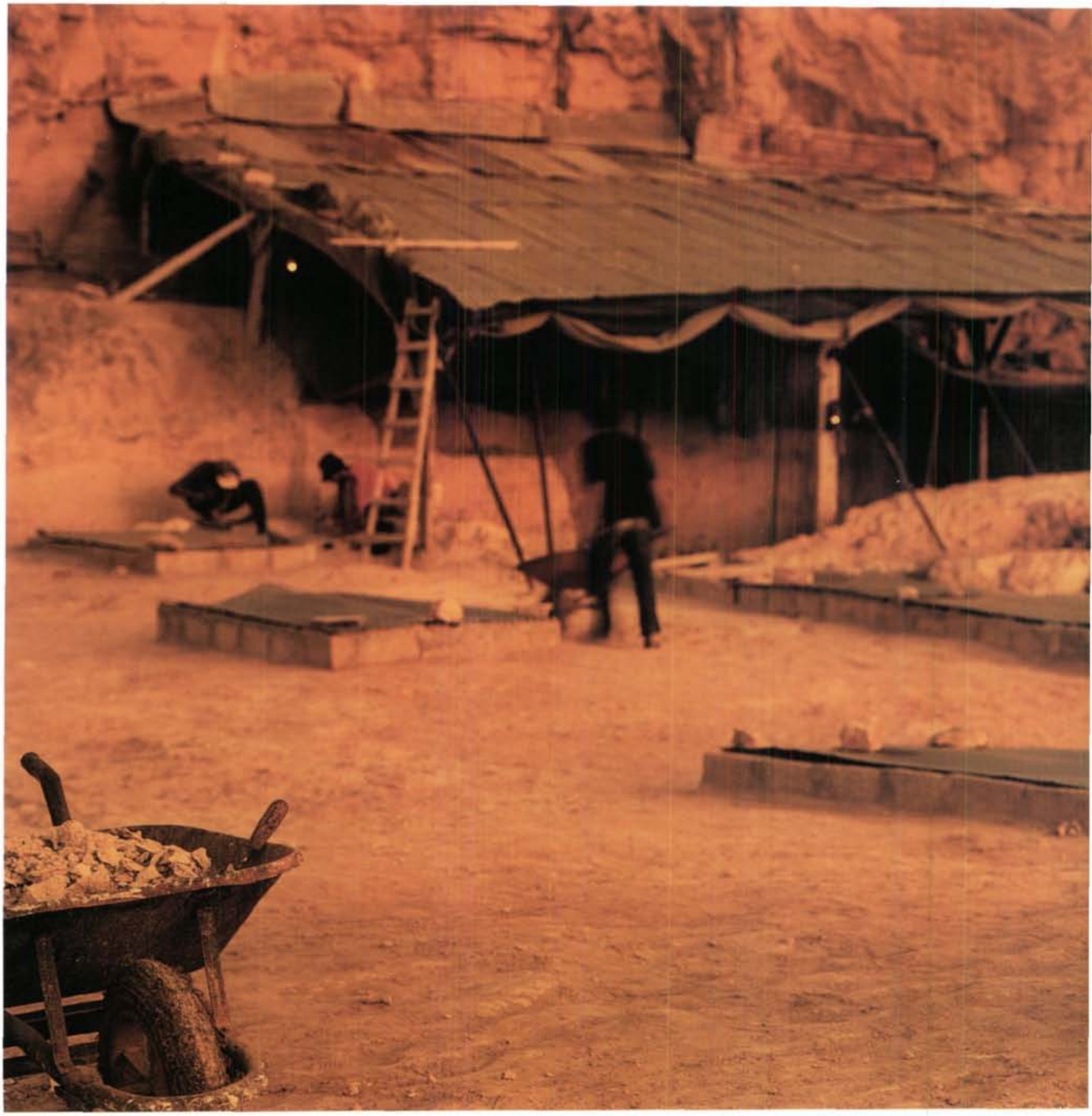

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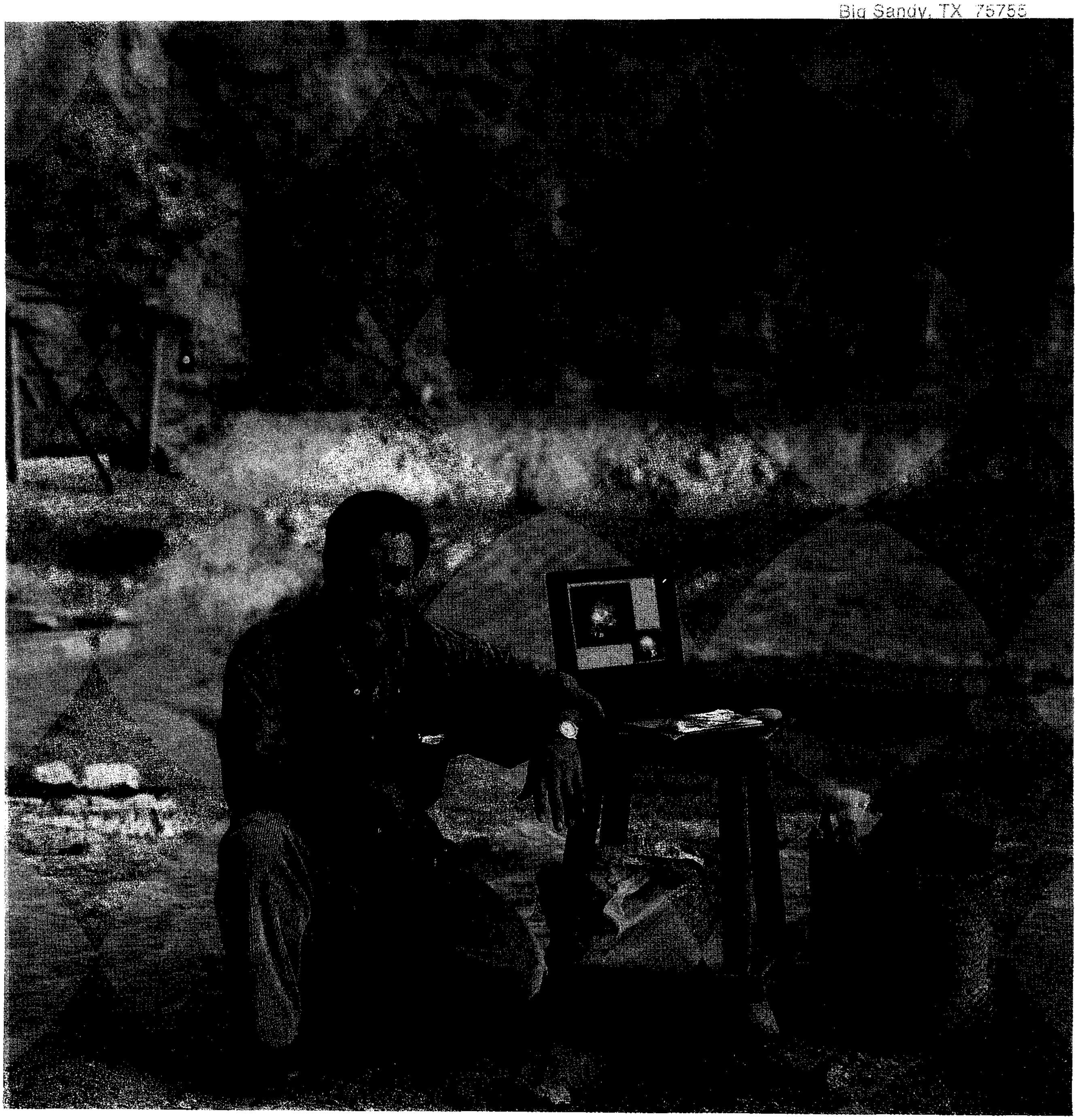

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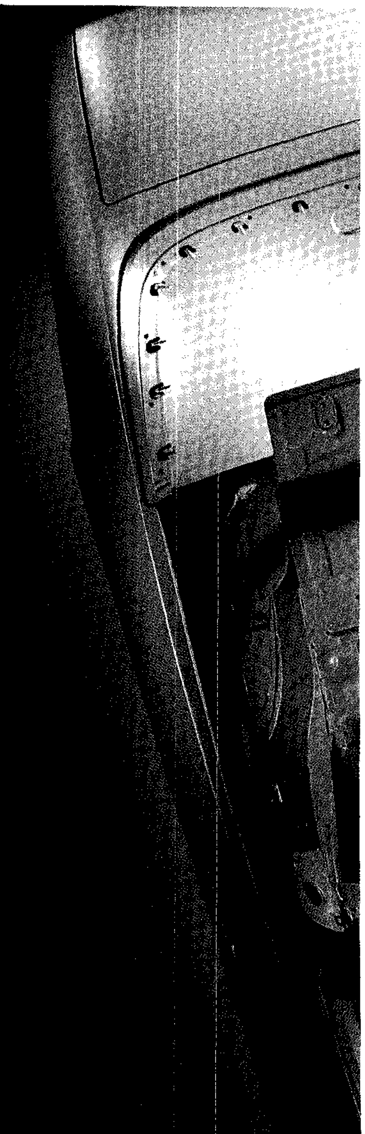

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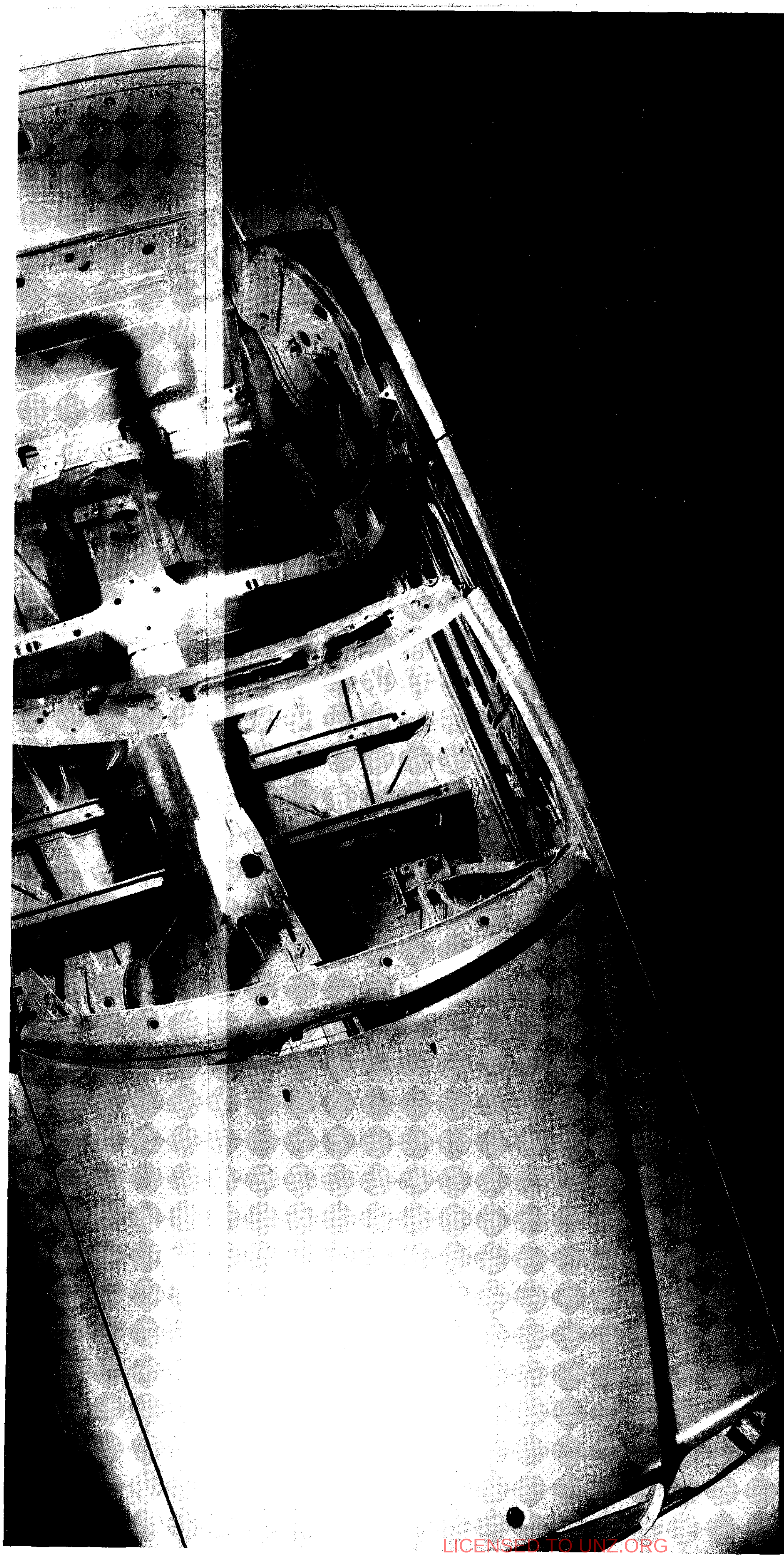

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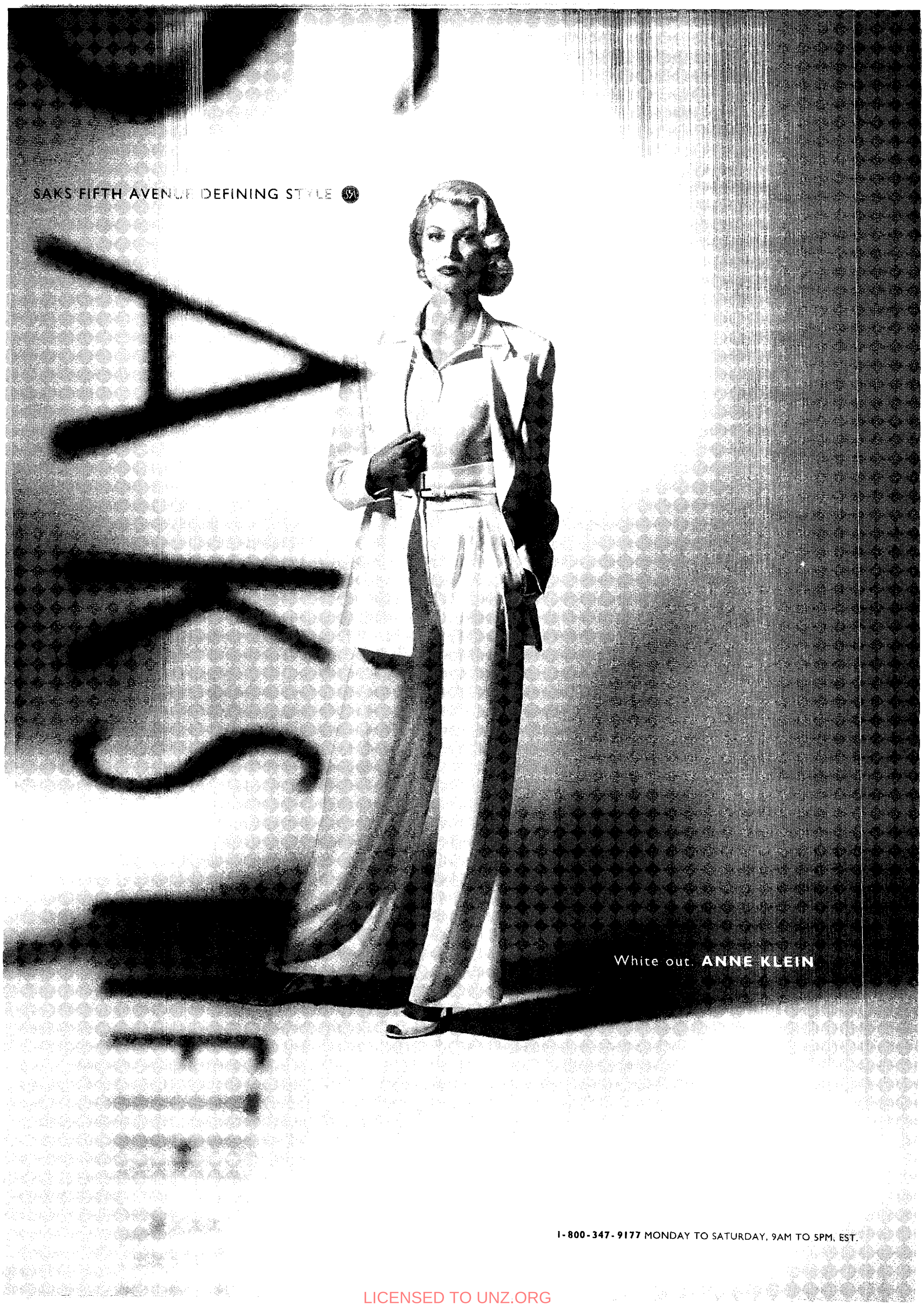
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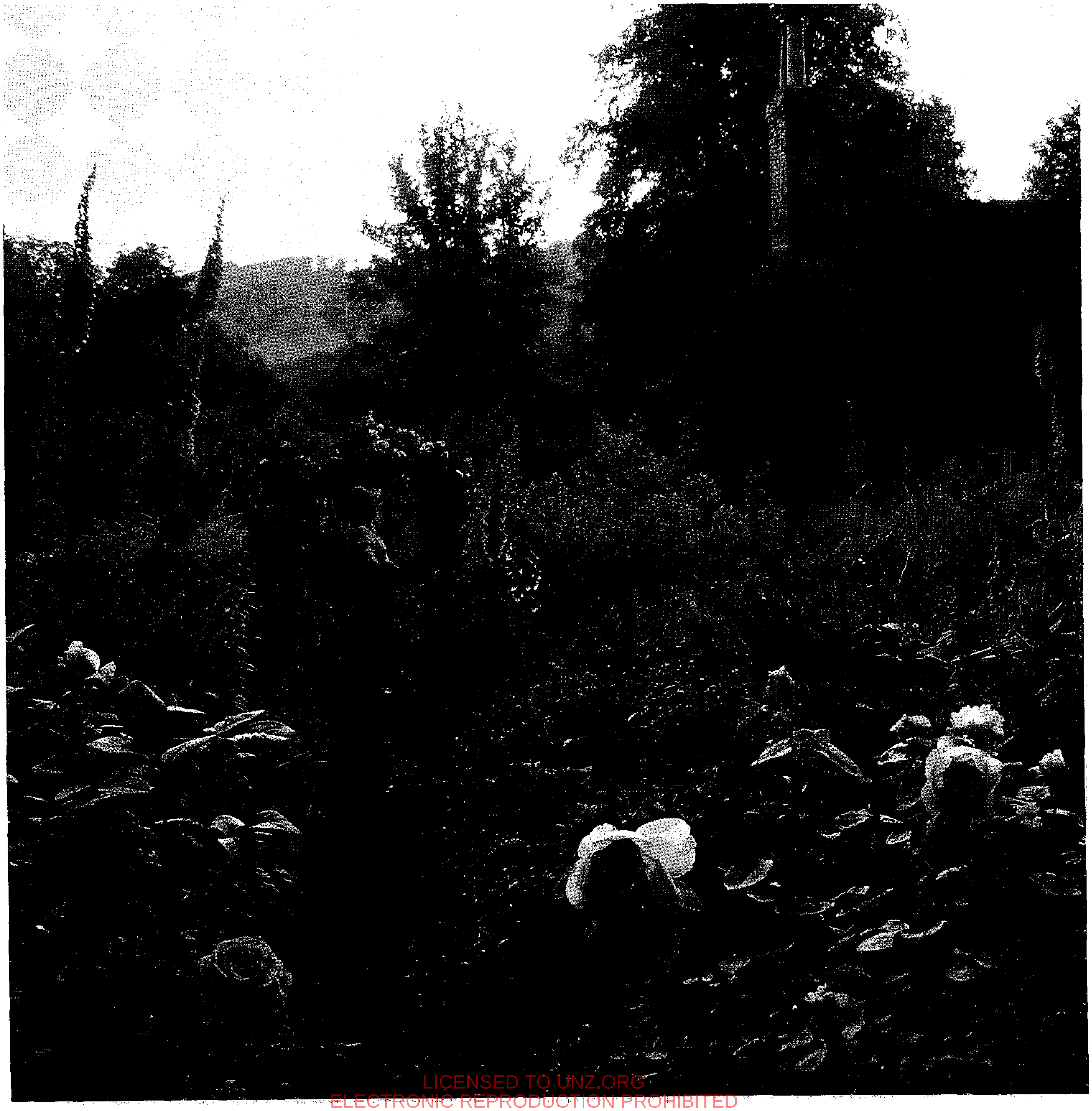

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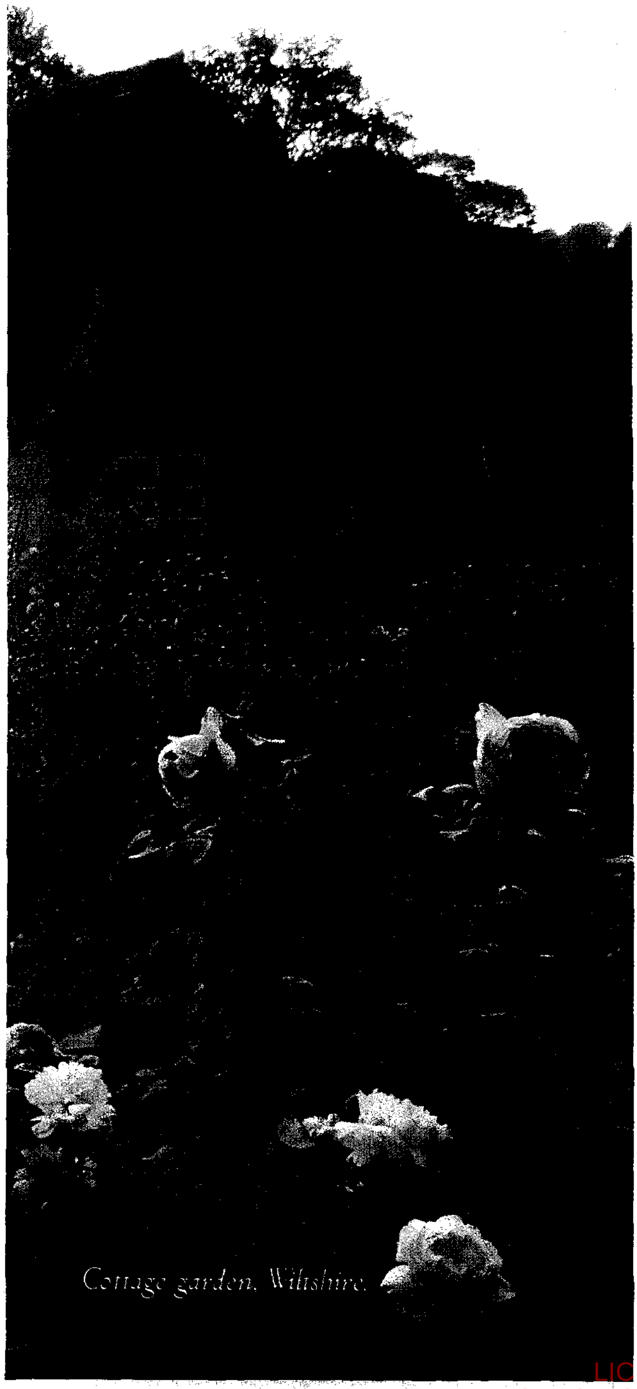

Cottage garden, Wiltshire.

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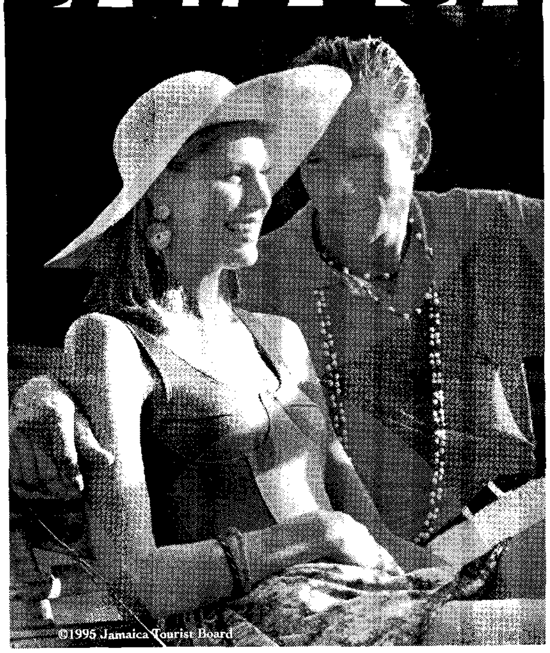

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COMMENT

DOS MISÉRABLES

After Quasimodo and Gutenberg, it's Microsoft Bob.

THE single greatest shift in the history of mass-communication technology occurred in the fifteenth century and was well described by Victor Hugo in a famous chapter of "Notre-Dame de Paris." The prevailing technology was the size of a city block. It was a cathedral. On all parts of the giant building, statuary and stone representations of every kind, combined with huge windows of stained glass, told the stories of the Bible and the saints, displayed the intricacies of Christian theology, adverted to the existence of highly unpleasant demonic winged creatures, referred diplomatically to the majesties of political power, and, in addition, by means of bells in bell towers (manned in Hugo's novel by the hunchback Quasimodo), told time for the benefit of all of Paris and much of France. It was an awesome engine of communication.

Then came the transition to something still more awesome. The new technology of mass communication was portable, could sit on your table, and was easily replicable, and yet, paradoxically (considering its compact size), contained more information, more systematically presented, than even the largest of cathedrals. It was the printed book. And, though Gutenberg's book had certain limitations compared with a cathedral—provided no bells, could not tell time—the over-all superiority of the new invention was unmistakable. In the next several centuries, humanity produced more books and fewer cathedrals, and the technological shift was made.

Hugo, in his account of how that happened, pictured the book's ascent as straightforward progress and, anticlerical that he was ("Every civilization begins in theocracy and ends in democracy"), smiled at the thought. Even so, when you think about the triumph of the book over the cathedral it's easy to imagine that progress for civilization was not necessarily progress for every individual person. The cathedral corresponds to a certain kind of human personality, the book to another kind. Cathedrals are for bell lovers, statue admirers, partisans of color and shape as narrative forms, people who gasp at spectacles of height and depth. Books are for people who find silence absorbing, who make pictures in their heads, who find nothing daunting about parallel lines

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of black type. To go from cathedrals to books was fine for humanity; but it must have been sheer misery for the cathedral personalities.

In the last ten or twenty years, we have been undergoing a more or less equivalent shift—this time to a new life as a computer-using population. The gain in portability, capability, ease, orderliness, accuracy, reliability, and information-storage over anything achievable by pen scribbling, typewriting, and cabinet filing is recognized by all. (Computers even tell time and have bells, like Notre-Dame.) The progress for civilization is undeniable and, plainly, irreversible. Yet, just as the book's triumph over the cathedral divided people into two groups, one of which prospered (the book personalities) while the other lapsed into gloom and tourism (the cathedral personalities), the computer's triumph over pen scribbling, typewriting, and cabinet filing has divided the human race.

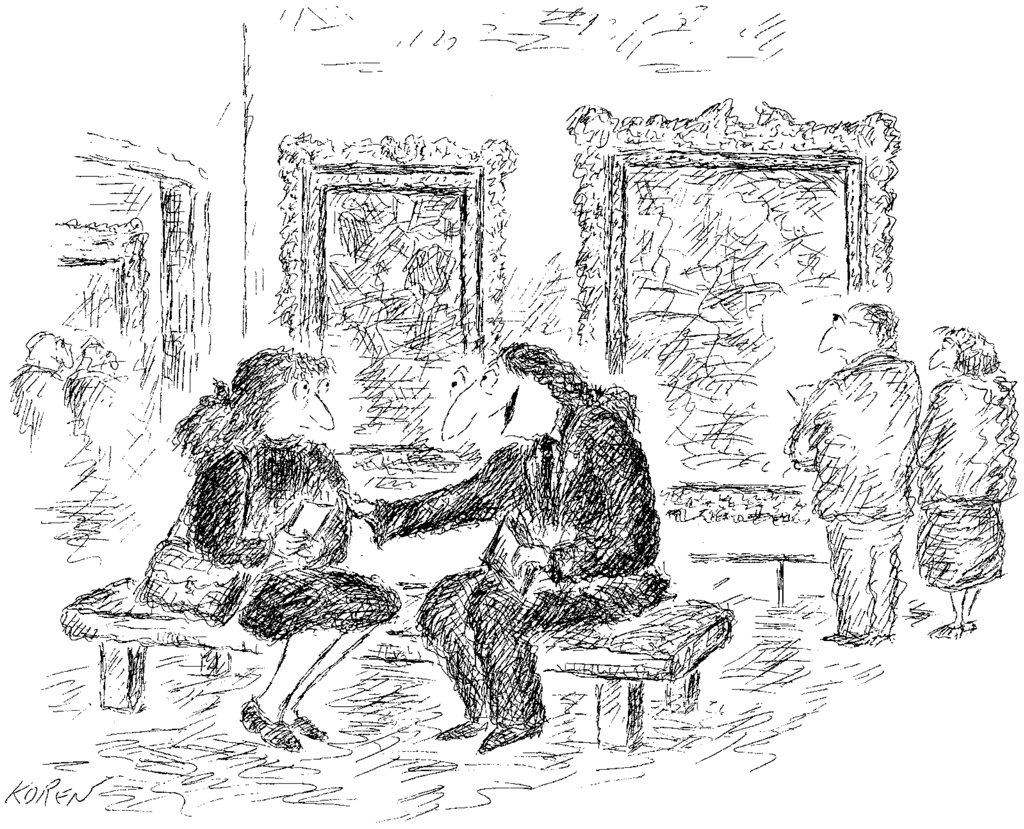
You have only to bring a new computer into a room to see that some people begin at once to buzz with curiosity and excitement, sit down to conduct experiments, ooh and ah at the boxes and beeps, and master the use of a new computer or a new program as quickly and happily as athletes playing a delightful new game. But how different it is—how grim and frightful!—for the other people, the defeated class, whose temperament does not naturally respond to computers. Nothing in a new computer, or an old one, is a joy to them. The machine whirrs and glows before them, and their faces twitch. It is not necessarily a matter of faulty education. Their instincts are all wrong, and no amount of manual-studying and mouse-clicking will make them right. That second class of people may be splendidly educated, as measured by book-reading. But computers require a sharply different set of aptitudes, and, if the aptitudes are missing, little can be done, and misery is guaranteed; so millions upon millions of such people have been miserable for ten or twenty years now, ever since the wretched (for them) computer revolution began.

Is the computer industry aware that computers have divided mankind into two new, previously unknown classes, the computer personalities and the noncomputer personalities; and that for the noncomputer personalities civilization's progress has been a continuous misery? Yes, the industry knows this. Vast sums have been expended in order to adapt the computer to the limitations of noncomputer personalities. Apple's Macintosh, with its zooming animations and pull-down menus and little pictures of file folders and watch faces and trash cans, pointed the way. Such seductions have soothed the apprehensions of a certain number of the computer-averse—just as, no doubt, the beautiful illuminated Gothic capitals in Gutenberg's book made that new technology more user-friendly to the cathedral people.

This spring, the computer industry's efforts are reaching a culmination of sorts. Microsoft, Bill Gates's giant corporation, is to bring out a program package called Microsoft Bob, designed by Mr. Gates's wife, Melinda French, and intended to render computer technology available even to people who are openly terrified of computers. Bob's principle is to take the several tasks of operating a computer, rename them in a folksy style, and assign to them the images of an ideal living room in an ideal home, with furniture and bookshelves, and with chummy cartoon helpers ("Friends of Bob") to guide the computer user over the rough spots, and, in that way, simulate an atmosphere that feels nothing like computers.

It is an agreeable idea. We can hope Bob does what it is supposed to do, and computer technology becomes attractive to a new set of people. But it is hard to believe that anything of the sort will happen. The temperaments of mankind are graven in stone (as we used to say in the age of cathedrals). People with computer-style talents will prosper, with or without Bob; everyone else will lag behind. That is unavoidable, and neither Bob nor any other program will ever fully soothe the hurt. Technology advances and that is wonderful. But it is not wonderful for everybody. Progress exists. But it is never *merely* progress. The cry "Forward!" has always had an echo, which has always responded, in a thin, distant voice, "Backward!"

—PAUL BERMAN



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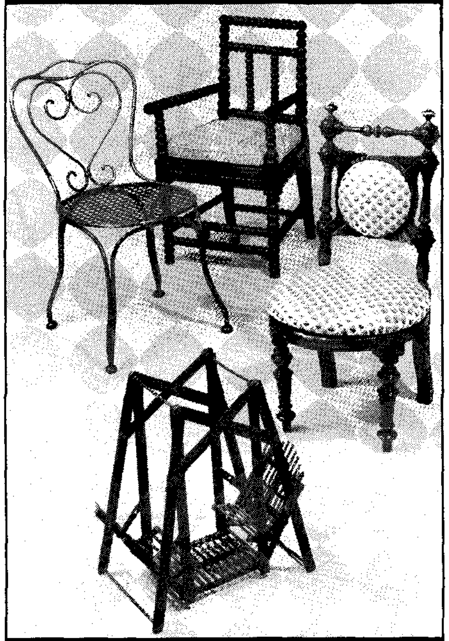

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IN THE MAIL

MAXINE MASON'S LAST DAYS

I read with deep regret of the death of Maxine Mason ("The Last Days of Sylvia Frumkin," by Susan Sheehan, February 20th and 27th). She was forty-six years old, with a diagnosis of schizophrenia; I am a forty-seven-year-old woman with the same diagnosis. Unlike Ms. Mason, who was warehoused in a back ward of a mental hospital, I live in my own apartment, hold two jobs (as a contributing editor at the homeless newspaper *Spare Change* and as the editor of the Massachusetts Mental Health Center newsletter), and have a decent marriage, friends, and the capacity to enjoy life, thanks to the staff at the Massachusetts Mental Health Center. They kept me alive through ten years of unspeakable suffering, until Clozaril was administered to me and greatly improved my functioning.

Maxine went off her Clozaril and became psychotic again. My experience with that drug is that there is a period when one becomes more lucid and more able to ascertain one's relationship to society. It's like being on a bridge, where one can see clearly where one has come from, and knows that the pain one has been through to get to this point has been excruciating and has served no purpose. One must then decide, with the knowledge that one's only area of expertise is as a career mental patient, whether or not to continue the struggle for sanity and increased functioning. The decision is very simply made: if reality is too painful, all one must do to escape is stop the Clozaril. It seems to me that this is what Maxine did, in rebellion against a realistic perception of herself that was too painful to accept.

LINDA R. LARSON
Cambridge, Mass.

My father was a schizophrenic. He died in January of this year, at the age of fifty-one. The onset of the illness was later for him than for many. He obtained a doctorate in sociology, taught for ten years, and published two well-received books in his field. He reared me, with my mother, until I was twelve. But by last year he was reduced to the proverbial lunatic screaming on a street corner.

Although I enjoyed Sheehan's article, I could not help wishing that there were less pathos and more fury and indignation in it. I understand the sense of loss that she expressed so well, but what matters most is what happens to the next generation of schizophrenics. On the federal and local levels, government is making deep cuts in funding for basic research. If these cuts continue, the next generation of schizophrenics will also live the life that Ms. Mason and my father lived.

N. LACHENMEYER
New York City

MAKING A STATEMENT

We are writing in response to "The Shit-Kickers of Madison Avenue" (The Talk of the Town, by Lillian Ross, February 20th and 27th). We realize that the article is a parody exaggerating the life styles of Upper East Side teen-age girls at private schools, but we feel that it creates a prejudice against us. Many of us do not smoke or wear boots described as "chic black laceups, all with Vibram soles, all with steel tips."

The article portrays us as ignorant and as having low self-esteem. It reports a conversation among some girls in which all the sentences the girls say are written as questions. There are those of us who may inadvertently speak in this tone, but most of us speak with enough confidence to make statements. We go to excellent schools, and in these schools we have learned to speak with some authority.

And not all teen-age girls prepare for parties in the manner reported in the article. We have tried on our clothing before and do not need to dump it onto the floor in order to decide what to wear. We do not need to spend an hour and a half every Saturday afternoon grooming ourselves. Most important, we do not all drink. True, many teen-agers drink, but some of us do not drink "vodka with orange juice or vodka and cranberry juice," and it is just as important to remember those who do not drink as it is to heighten awareness of those who do.

The entire Class X of the Nightingale-Bamford School is proud of its school and of who we are. We do not take exception to being described in such a vulgar and generalized manner, because it is not accurate. We feel we deserve more credit than we have received from *The New Yorker.*

CLASS X OF THE NIGHTINGALE-BAMFORD SCHOOL
New York City

SECRET ADMIRER

Your seventieth-anniversary issue was terrific, but after reading "Travolta's Second Act," Martin Amis's Profile of John Travolta, some of us at *Entertainment Weekly* wondered, Is there an echo in here?

What made our ears ring was the barrage of quotes and descriptions that Amis lifted from "The Man in the Plastic Bubble," by Jeff Gordinier, our October 21, 1994, cover story. Even though Amis indicated in the standard way (by writing that Travolta "once said," "It has been said that Travolta is," etc.) when something he used had been published before, one reaches a critical mass at a half-dozen or so borrowings from a single source. Gordinier admires Amis's work; evidently the feeling is mutual. Still, it would have been nice if *The New Yorker* had given credit where credit was due.

JAMES W. SEYMORE, JR.
Managing Editor, *Entertainment Weekly*
New York City

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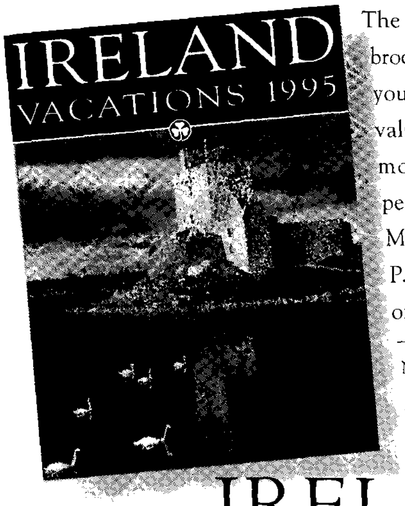

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

Word Gets Around

"WORD OF MOUTH" is an apt enough title for James Lecesne's solo show, but it's also a good description of the kind of slow, steady buildup that the actor has been getting since he started performing it last November at Camilla's Theatre Gallery, a cozy performance space in Tribeca. With few mainstream reviews and no professional P.R., Lecesne suddenly started packing them in. Mike Nichols and Elaine May, two early fans, did more than just phone their friends: they offered to produce the show at a larger theatre, and starting April 16 "Word of Mouth" begins a Sunday-and-Monday-night run at the Promenade (580-1313).

Lecesne's characters are as delightful as Ruth Draper's, as soul-searchingly eccentric as Lily Tomlin's. His Trevor, a gay twelve-year-old, best captures the evening's spirit. When Trevor downs a bottle of aspirin in a suicide attempt, Lecesne's craft, as he goes through a rapid-fire display of emotion, is something to see. It whets your appetite for his next acting assignment, an AIDS play by Eve Ensler called "Extraordinary Measures," which is scheduled for HERE later in the spring.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Arcadia—The American première of Tom Stoppard's 1993 play, set in 1809 and the present. With Blair Brown and Victor Garber. Two previews on March 29. Opens March 30 at 6:45. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Clothes for a Summer Hotel—The York Theatre Company's revival of Tennessee Williams' 1980 drama, starring Carrie Nye. In previews. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820.)

The Cryptogram—A new play by David Mamet, with Ed Begley, Jr., Felicity Huffman, and Shelton Dane. In previews. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Dancing on Moonlight—Keith Glover's play, set in Harlem in the early sixties, stars Howard Rollins, Anna Maria Horsford, and Andre De Shields and features an original score by Max Roach. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

The Family Business—Ain Gordon and David Gordon wrote, directed, and appear in this comedy about a family of plumbers. Valda Setterfield (mother of Ain, wife of David) rounds out the cast. Previews through April 2. Opens April 3 at 8. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
2	3	4	29	30	31	1

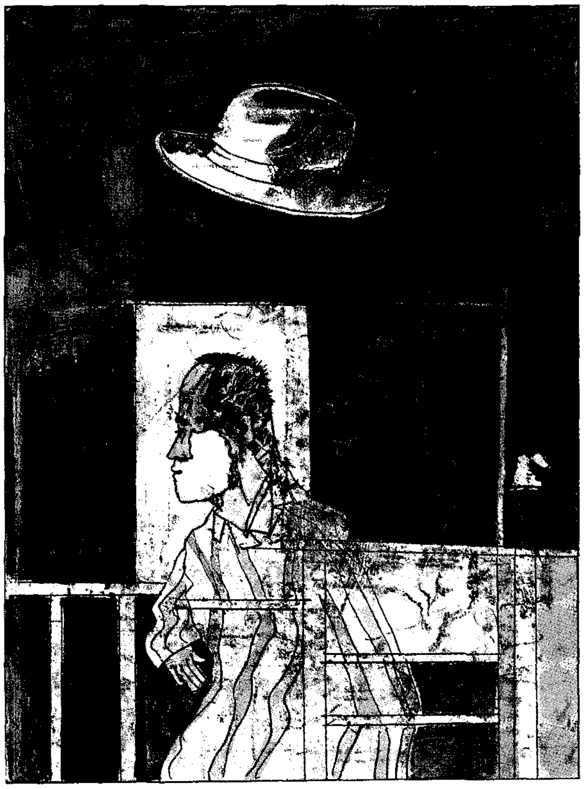
Gentlemen Prefer Blondes—KT Sullivan is Lorelei Lee in a revival of the 1949 musical with a book by Anita Loos and Joseph Fields, a score by Jule Styne, and lyrics by Leo Robin. Presented by the National Actors Theatre. In previews. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6280.)

Having Our Say—Mary Alice and Gloria Foster star in an adaptation of Sarah Louise and Anne Elizabeth Delany's best-selling book "Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years." Adapted and directed by Emily Mann. In previews. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

London Suite—A new comedy by Neil Simon, with Carole Shelley, Paxton Whitehead, Kate Burton, and Jeffrey Jones. In previews. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

Luck, Pluck & Virtue—Neil Patrick Harris leads the cast of a new play by James Lapine, which is based on the 1934 Nathanael West novel, "A Cool Million." Previews through April 2. Opens April 4 at 8. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

Memories of an Unknown Celebrity—Michael Mindlin's monologue about his famous friends. Directed by Phyllis Newman. In previews. (William Redfield, 354 W. 45th St. 279-4200.)



Yoshi Oida, in "The Man Who."

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

Mrs. Warren's Profession—The Pearl Theatre Company wraps up its season with Shaw's drama. Margo Skinner is Mrs. W. Previews through April 1. Opens April 2 at 2. (80 St. Mark's Pl. 598-9802.)

Night and Her Stars—A play by Richard Greenberg, about the quiz-show scandals of the fifties. The cast includes Patrick Breen, Peter Frechette, and John Slattery. Presented by Manhattan Theatre Club. In previews. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

The Only Thing Worse You Could Have Told Me . . .—Dan Butler takes a look at contemporary gay culture, in his one-man show. Previews through April 1. Opens April 2 at 7. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 307-4100.)

Out of This World—Gregg Edelman, Andrea Martin, Marin Mazzie, and Ken Page, in a concert version of the 1950 Cole Porter musical. Four performances only: March 30-31 at 8 and April 1 at 2 and 8. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

The Pirates of Penzance—The Blue Hill Troupe's production of the Gilbert and Sullivan classic opens March 31 at 8 and runs through April 8. (John Jay Theatre, Tenth Ave. at 58th St. For reservations, call 988-2012.)

St. Mark's Gospel—Alec McCowen reprises his solo recitation of the entire King James version of the New Testament book. Opens March 29 at 8. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

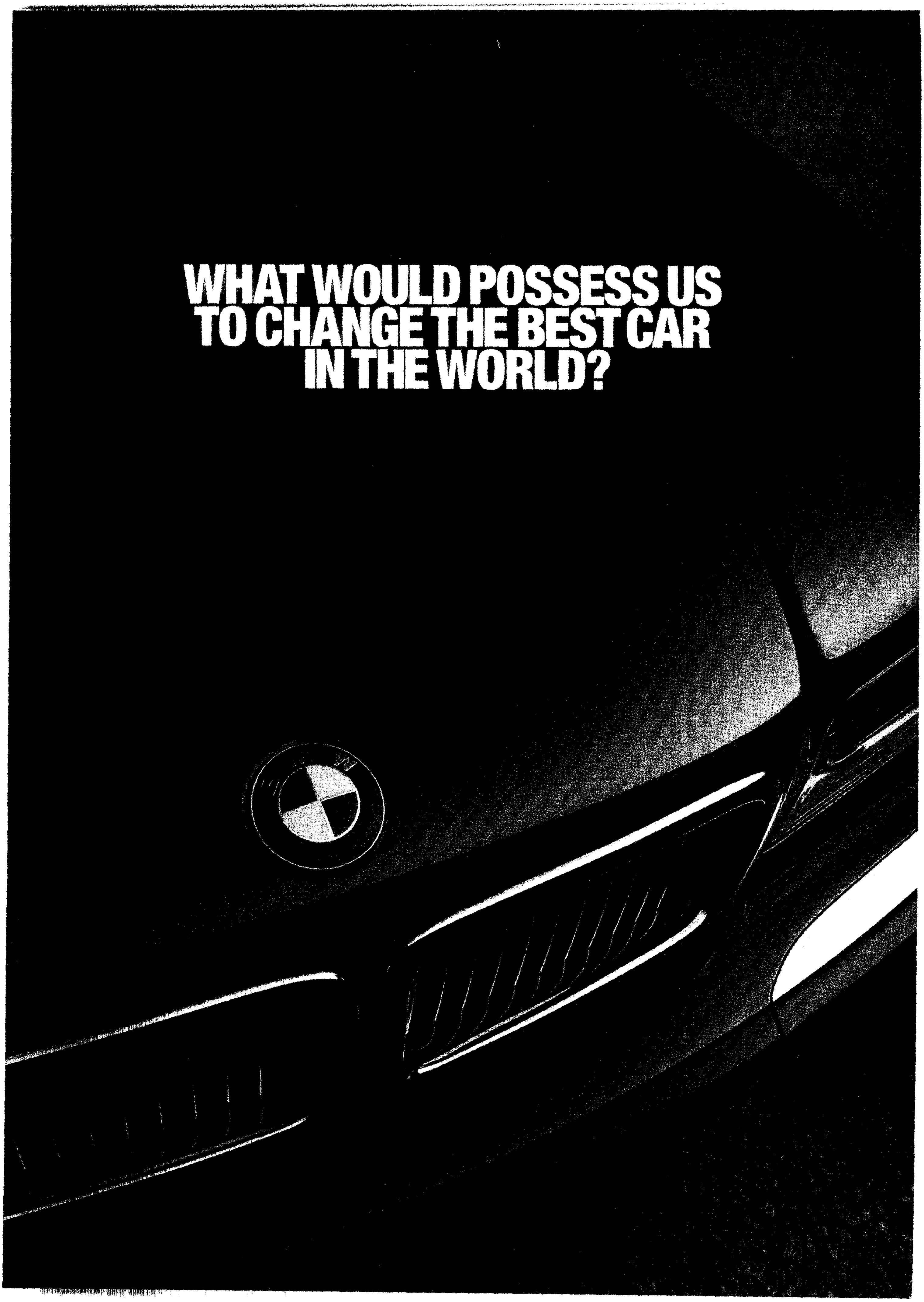
Three Viewings—Jeffrey Hatcher's play, which is set in a funeral home, consists of three monologues, delivered by Buck Henry, Penny Fuller, and Margaret Whitton. Previews through April 2. Opens April 4 at 7:30. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Watbanaland—A play about a woman (Lisa Emery), who wants to have a baby, and her husband (David Chandler), who doesn't. Written by Doug Wright. Opens March 29 at 8. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Awake and Sing!—Tovah Feldshuh, Stephen Lang, and Avery Schreiber in a revival of Clifford Odets' 1935 drama about a struggling Bronx family. (Playhouse 91, 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Closes April 2.)

Camping with Henry & Tom—Henry Ford (John Cunningham), Thomas Edison (Robert Prosky), and Warren Harding (Ken Howard) are out camping one day. . . . So begins Mark St. Germain's fictional account of an actual woodland episode from 1921. The talk around the campfire is, unsurprisingly, about power: Ford lusts after it, Harding wants to abdicate it, and Edison doesn't give a good God damn. In the peaceful-looking copse that James Leonard Joy has designed, history comes alive, but it doesn't go much beyond the bickering and joshing of these three flawed titans. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)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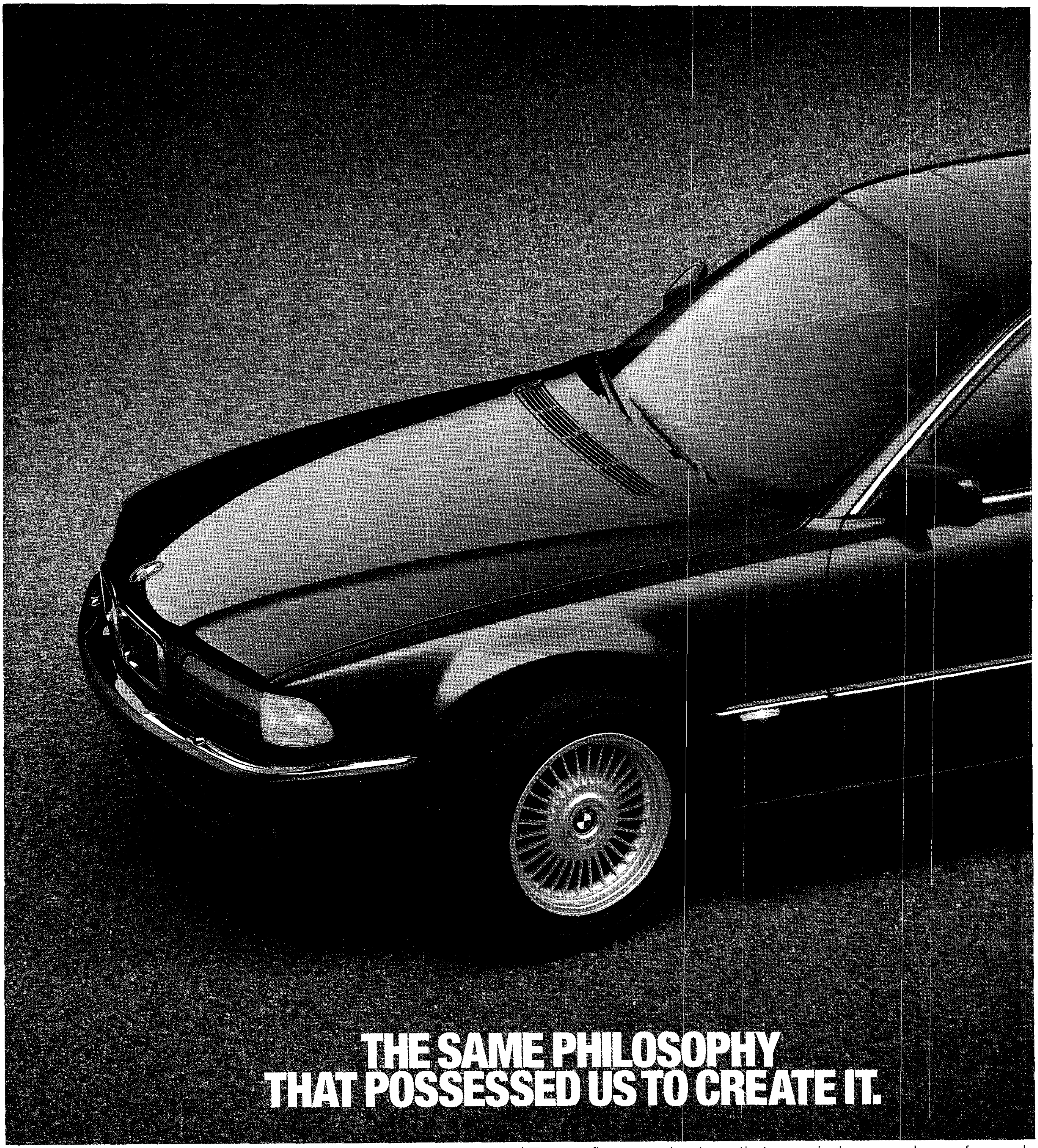

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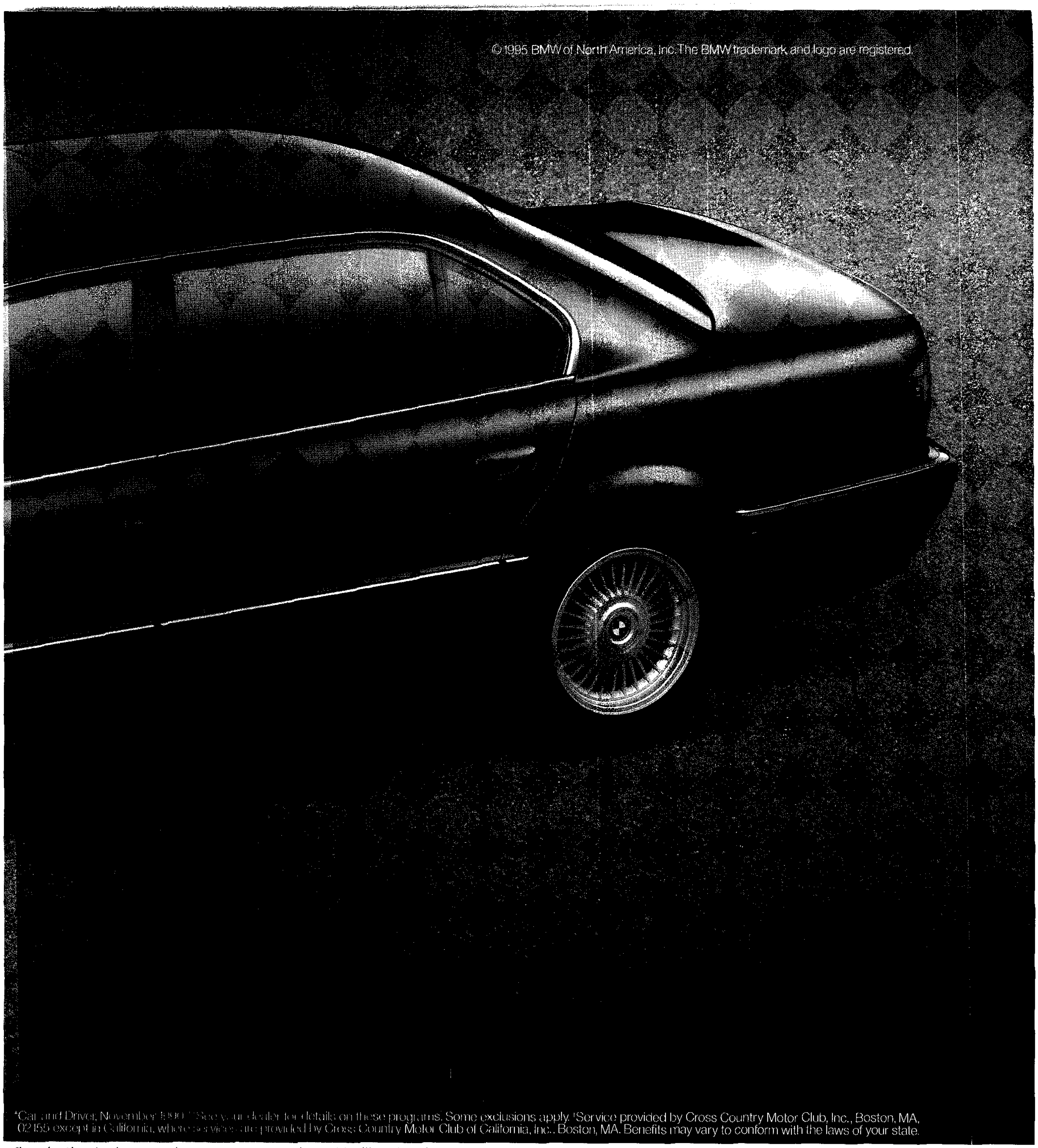

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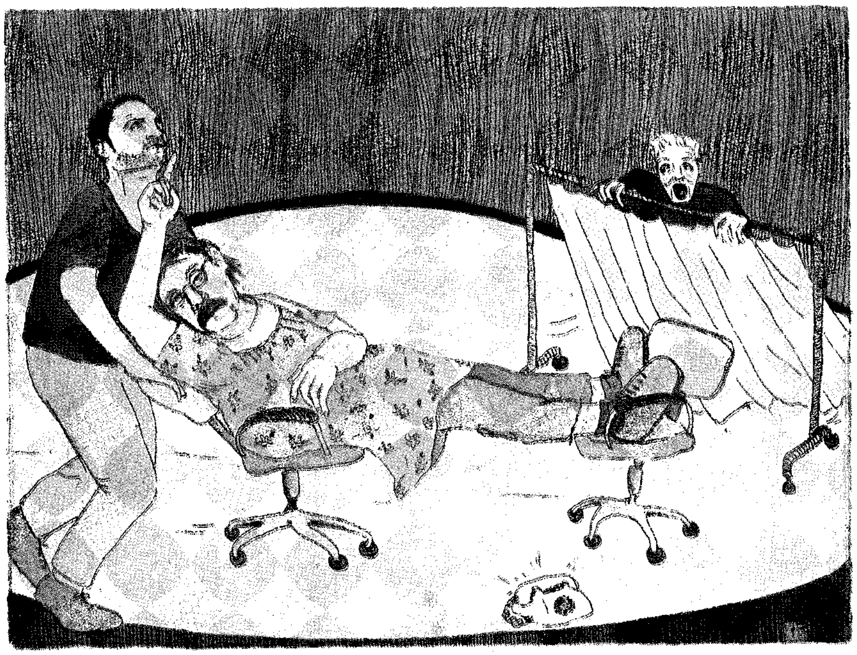
Carmen—Ridiculous Theatrical Company playwrights Everett Quinton and Eureka have borrowed liberally from classic camp movies (especially "Caged") to come up with a suitably Ridiculous take on Prosper Mérimée's tragic tale. Quinton is in top form as the hot-blooded, coldhearted gypsy. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

The Compleat Works of Wllm Shkspr (Abridged)—This slapstick hour and a half romp through the Bard's oeuvre, carried out by three fine young gentlemen in high-tops, is utterly sophomoric and a complete waste of time—like some of the best things in life. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)



Ain Gordon, David Gordon, and Valda Setterfield, in "The Family Business."

LARA TOMLIN

Damn Yankees—There's just no stopping Jerry Lewis. The King of Comedy and the King of France is now, in his Broadway début, the Prince of Darkness—the Devil himself. Theatregoers hoping to see him bring some of his clownish, cross-eyed shtick to the role will not be disappointed: the old pro delivers the goods. And Charlotte d'Amboise is a sensational Lola—she delivers the goods and then some. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Death Defying Acts—Three subpar one-act comedies, by David Mamet, Elaine May, and Woody Allen, that have the words "Written to Order" stamped all over them. Despite a couple of good, sly performances by Linda Lavin and Gerry Becker, the evening is a big downer—pushy and full of undigested viciousness. (3/20/95) (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

Don Juan in Chicago—A new comedy by David Ives. Directed by Robert Stanton. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

Gilgamesh—Andrew C. Ordover's take on the Sumerian myth incorporates elements of dance and puppetry. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. Closes April 8. For information about tickets, call 388-8100.)

The Heiress—A revival of Ruth and Augustus Goetz's 1947 adaptation of Henry James' "Washington Square," directed by Gerald Gutierrez, that is emotionally brimming and, thanks to several memorable performances, alive with tension. Cherry Jones, who plays the heiress of the title, is exquisitely—almost unbearably—vulnerable; Philip Bosco brings a terrible authority to the role of her dutiful but soul-crushing father. And the wonderful Frances Sternhagen is, not surprisingly, touching and funny as a widowed aunt. (3/20/95) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Henry VI—This distillation of Shakespeare's three plays into two long, fairly independent parts lays bare the machinations surrounding the Wars of the Roses—so bare, unfortunately, that there's little sense of character left and you don't care who wins. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200. Closes April 8.)

Holiday Heart—Cheryl L. West's thoughtful and thought-provoking play, which takes place in inner-city Chicago, is named after its central character—an out-there, over-the-top drag queen (if that's not a tautology) who is the Rock of Gibraltar to a troubled next-door neighbor and her young daughter, and who is played with great vitality by Keith Randolph Smith. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes April 9.)

How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying—Matthew Broderick is the ambitious window-washer J. Pierrepont Finch in this revival of the 1961 musical. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Incommunicado—Tom Dulack's drama about Ezra Pound's confinement on an American military base in Italy at the end of the Second World War. Tom Aldredge portrays the poet. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

I've Got the Shakes—In the center of Richard Foreman's latest piece of metaphysical mischief, Jan Leslie Harding gives a remarkably composed performance as Madeline X, a somewhat bewildered teacher who hopes to enlighten a place called Ignorance. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650. Closes April 9.)

Kokoro—Velina Hasu-Houston's drama concerns a meek Japanese woman living in California who is rescued during an attempt to drown herself and her small daughter. *Oyako-shinju* (family suicide) is an honorable act in Japan but utterly unacceptable here. Cultural conflicts have seldom been so intelligently explored on the stage. The woman is rivetingly played by Ako; the use of poetry, Kabuki movement, makeup, and props to convey Japanese spirituality is imaginative and moving. (28th Street Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 996-7287. Closes April 2.)

Laura Dennis—Horton Foote's beautiful new play, set in 1938, follows the interwoven lives of three families in Harrison, Texas, a small town where, as Hallie Foote's character cries, "Nothing is all right." While the action—a seduction, a murder, a death, a business deal, a marriage, and a dance—takes place offstage, what happens onstage is often funny, always potent, and finally devastating. The fluid direction is by James Houghton. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 279-4200. Closes April 9.)

Love! Valour! Compassion!—The eight gay men in Terrence McNally's beautifully written drama connect in ways that almost any nuclear family would envy. Under the nimble direction of Joe Mantello, seven actors (including Stephen Bogardus, John Glover—doing double duty as identical twins—and the wonderful Nathan Lane) present humbling evidence of what love is and can be. Mr. Lane leaves the show after the April 2 performance; Mario Cantone takes over his role starting April 4. (11/14/94) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

The Man Who—In his adaptation of "The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat," Oliver Sacks' collection of essays, the director Peter Brook has fashioned a piece of theatre without sensationalizing the neurologist's real-life case studies. The play is a brave, visionary journey through the weird outskirts of consciousness. (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100. Closes April 9.)

Manhattan Class Company—The group's seventh annual one-act festival features plays by Peter Lefcourt, Rafael Lima, Patrick Breen, and Tom Burnett. (120 W. 28th St. 727-7765. Closes April 1.)

Miami Stories: Bellow, Malamud & Klavan—An evening of one-act comedies. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes April 2.)

Rob Becker's Defending the Caveman—A one-man comedy about the relationship between men and women, written and performed by Mr. Becker. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100.)

Rush Limbaugh in Night School—In Charlie Varon's one-man play, the conservative talk-show host is taking Spanish at the New School with a bunch of left-wingers. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Show Boat—Harold Prince's bighearted production of the 1927 Jerome Kern-Oscar Hammerstein II musical is epic-size, full of life and full of vision. With John McMartin and Elaine Stritch as the patriarch and the matriarch of the floating theatre, and Lonette McKee, whose moving rendition of "Bill" is the show's most intimate moment. (10/17/94) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Smokey Joe's Café—The Songs of Leiber and Stoller—A feast of music by those cool cats Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, performed by a cast with Grade A lungs and legs. The songs themselves—"Hound Dog," "Yakety Yak," "On Broadway," "Stand by Me," and a few dozen more—are a blissful pop marriage of black and white. But the accompanying band has about as much soul as a run-of-the-mill combo at a wedding reception. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

Sunset Boulevard—Glenn Close has taken the monumental role of Norma Desmond and made it something all her own, in Andrew Lloyd Webber's homage to Billy Wilder and Charles Brackett's 1950 fable of Hollywood corruption and dementia. (12/5/94) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007.)

Swingtime Canteen—A re-creation of a 1944 U.S.O. concert, performed in a night club. Extraneous bits of plot threaten to derail the show, but the lovely songs, done with verve and charm, carry the day. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Translations—A new production of Brian Friel's 1981 play, starring Dana Delany, Brian Dennehy, Donal Donnelly, and Rufus Sewell. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Trust—A look at love in the nineties, by Steven Dietz. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 522-1402. Closes April 2.)

Uncle Bob—Austin Pendleton's new two-man play, which takes place in a Manhattan apartment, is an intense, claustrophobic, and sometimes very funny two-day encounter between a dying middle-aged man and

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his nihilistic college-dropout nephew. Both George Morfogen and the young Adam Stein give riveting, discomfiting performances. (Mint Theatre Company, 311 W. 43rd St., fifth floor. 315-9434.)

Varla and the Man Who Got Away—The putative daughter of Ethel Merman and Ernest Borgnine has overcome the trauma of having been shunned as a child and is ready to claim her show-biz birthright on the legitimate stage. It's a travesty indeed that this giggly, mock-autobiographical cabaret show follows up its glamorous premise with nothing but predictable camp. If only the six-foot, red-headed Varla Jean Merman (Jeff Roberson) had an ounce of her mother's vocal talent—or her *father's*—she would be sitting pretty. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391.)

We Won't Pay! We Won't Pay!—The New York Italian Theatre Company's hilarious production of Dario Fo's 1974 play. It's his usual mix of perfectly wrought farce and leftist politics, but the farce wins out, thanks to the sure touch of director Piero Dusa and to a terrific cast. The performances alternate between English and Italian. (Duality Playhouse, 119 W. 23rd St. 929-6392. Closes April 2.)

LONG RUNS

ALL IN THE TIMING: John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLOOD BROTHERS:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **AN INSPECTOR CALLS:** Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **JACKIE MASON: POLITICALLY INCORRECT:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477. . . . **THREE TALL WOMEN:** Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200. . . . **THAT'S LIFE!:** Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WHO'S TOMMY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

DANCE

"Ballet"—Frederick Wiseman, the documentary filmmaker best known for his incisive studies of mental institutions (“Titticut Follies”) and public schools (“High School”), is a master at recording the offhand phrase. In his new, nearly three-hour-long “Ballet,” he follows American Ballet Theater's dancers, choreographers, and backstage personnel through the arduous construction of a dance. Whether he's recording a ballet master's interview with a young hopeful or observing Natalia Makarova giving instructions in the projection of glamour and allure, Wiseman remains transfixed by the rigorous and highly traditional notion of beauty that the workers are trying to honor. “Ballet” celebrates what Agnes de Mille expresses in the film as the dancer's ultimate aim: “To move!” (Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. 727-8110. Through April 4.)

Feld Ballets/NY—March 29 at 8 and April 2 at 2: “Consort,” “Kore,” “Ogive,” and “Doghead & Godcatchers.” . . . ¶ March 30 at 8 and April 2 at 7:30: “Fauna,” “Ion,” “Over the Pavement,” and “Ludwig Gambits.” . . . ¶ March 31 at 8: “A Footstep of Air,” “Evoe,” “Chi,” and “Wolfgang Strategies.” . . . ¶ April 1 at 2, a family matinée: “Half Time,” “Hello Fancy,” “The Envelope,” and “23 Skidoo.” . . . ¶ April 1 and April 4 at 8: “Contra Pose,” “Gnossiennes,” and “The Jig Is Up.” (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through April 9.)

Tere O'Connor—The choreographer and his six-member company present the première of “Notes on Shame” and the return of last year's “I Love You, There's So Much Trouble in the World.” O'Connor's work is set where the exquisite meets the hysterical; it's surreal, and often very funny. In the new piece, the muteness of ballet becomes an expression of psychosis, presenting, for example, insanely exasperated versions of the traditional petit allegro (those bouncing-ball jumps). (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. March 28-April 1 at 8 and April 2 at 3.)

Zendora Dance Company—Five women in three works by Nancy Zendora: “The Return,” “The Descent,” and “White Density.” (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. March 30-April 2 at 8:30.)

"Toenails of Steel & Ruby Red Text"—Six collaborative works by black gay dancers and writers, including “Beggars,” with choreography by Ronald K. Brown and a text by Allen Wright. (Triangle Theatre, Long Island University's Brooklyn campus, Flatbush Ave. at DeKalb Ave. 1-718 875-9710. April 2 at 3 and 8.)

New York City Ballet—The Lincoln Center company visits the outer boroughs, performing works by Balanchine, Martins, and Forsythe. (Colden Center, Queens College. 1-718 793-8080. April 1 at 11 A.M. . . . ¶ John Dewey High School, 50 Avenue X, Brooklyn. April 1 at 3. For information about Dewey tickets, call 870-5650. . . . ¶ Lehman College Concert Hall, the Bronx. 1-718 960-8833. April 2 at 3.)

"Crash Orchestra"—Yoshiko Chuma and her company, the School of Hard Knocks, bring the orchestra and its instruments onstage—the bass player even joins in the dancing with his upright bass. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015. March 30-31 at 8 and April 1 at 2 and 8.)

"Sacred Topography"—For the Jewish Voices series, modern-dance choreographers Pearl Lang and Anna Sokolow present works in celebration of Passover. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. April 2 at 3.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Ronny Whyte and Leon (Boots) Maleson—The jazz singer/pianist and the bassist. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. March 29 at 12:30 P.M. Admission by contribution.)

Noa—An Israeli singer. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. March 30 at 8.)

Gladys Knight and Gerald LeVert—A souled-out evening. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6741. March 31 at 8 and midnight.)

Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers—Petty has moved gracefully from power-pop punkiness to a relaxed, folk-inflected midlife manner. He returns with new solo material (from the recently released “Wildflowers”), a Traveling Wilburys tune or two, and his huge sack of hits. With the Jayhawks. (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. April 2 at 8.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **JULIE WILSON** is currently in the midst of an extended run. Dining.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—March 31-April 1: The **CYNTHIA SCOTT** quintet. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—With three franchises in Japan and another in Jakarta, this blue-on-blue club is well on its way to world domination. Through April 2: the **CARIBBEAN JAZZ PROJECT** (featuring **PAQUITO D'RIVERA**) and the **DAVE VALENTIN** quintet. **NANCY WILSON** begins a week-long run on April 4. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—April 4: The **MIKE STERN** trio. Like most contemporary jazz guitarists, Stern has a bad case of run-on fingers, but his silken tone and bebop flair keep things listenable.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A duskily lit neighborhood bar, where pianists, bassists, and, occasionally, drummers compete for your ear. Truth and beauty usually prevail. On April 3, the jazz singer **KEVIN MAHOGANY** leads a trio. With Norman Simmons and Scott Colley. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—**BARBARA COOK** is in command of this urbane dinner-and-music room through late April, backed up by her longtime pianist and arranger **WALLY HARPER.** Her voice remains almost defiantly that of the nineteen-fifties Broadway ingénue, and her material, particularly her homage to Mabel Mercer, is as supple as a fresh corsage.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—Had **MC COY TYNER** (in through April 2) retired after leaving John Coltrane's group in 1965, the pianist would still be remembered as one of the most brilliant and unorthodox players of an era that prized iconoclasm in its musicians. Tyner never succumbed to the temptations of the electronic age; on his seventies records he didn't have to plug in his piano to make it thunder and ring with authority. A certain laxness pervaded his eighties work, but his drive returned with the dawn of the nineties. Saxophonist **GEORGE COLEMAN** drops by for a week starting April 4. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A sleek piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel. Thursdays through Sundays, **DONALD JOHNSTON** is the featured pianist; on weekends he performs with a trio. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Across the street from Lincoln Center, this restaurant and club features a handsome bar upstairs and a surreal performance space downstairs. The **HAROLD MABERN** trio performs through April 2, with Jamil Nasser (bass) and Tony Reedus (drums). Memphis piano players are known for their grits-and-gravy style and V-8-engine thrust; Mabern is no exception. Usually found behind George Coleman's barrelling bop unit, he's a force unto himself. Dining.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—An Old New York kind of place, with dark wood panelling, white tablecloths, and brass figurine lamps. March 29-April 1: **HILTON RUIZ** and **ANDY MC LOUD.** In his understated way, Ruiz may be the most versatile pianist on the scene. Standards, free-bop rambles, Latin rumbles—they all fall under his fingers with ease and authenticity.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—March 30: **CRAIG HARRIS & TAILGATER'S TALES.** Taking his cues from both Trummy Young and James Brown, trombonist Craig Harris is a funky post-modernist who's always in superb control no matter what the groove. March 31: **ELLIOTT SHARP'S CARBON.** April 2: More Silent Film/Loud Music. This evening's feature is “Blood and Sand,” with live accompaniment by **SPANISH FLY.** The **DAVID MURRAY** big band continues its Monday-night invasion.

Match, 160 Mercer St. (343-0020)—This hip SoHo *boîte* is the place to be every Sunday night, thanks to the **SHORTY JACKSON LEGACY BLUES BAND,** featuring the eighty-nine-year-old **LAUREL WATSON.** Dining.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Trumpeter **CHRIS BOTTI** (in on March 29) may be the Chuck Mangione of the nineties: he's just released an exquisitely glossy début called "First Wish." Except for one guest vocal by Edie Brickell, it's full of the sort of instrumental music that sounds perfect for Hollywood love scenes.

Metropolis, 31 Union Sq. W. (675-2300)—March 31-April 2: **SUSANNAH MC CORKLE.** Literate and well informed on the history of her art, McCorkle takes her audience on a jazz-inflected stroll through the last seventy years of American popular song, stopping along the way to breathe in the rarefied atmosphere of Porter, Mercer, Arlen, and several others, with a brief detour into the work of Brazilian tunesmiths Jobim and Bonfa. Tuesdays are given over to the **GEORGE GEE ORCHESTRA,** a seventeen-piece swing band.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—The great cabaret in the sky. **LESLIE UGGAMS** finishes up her monthlong run on April 1. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Michael Andrew and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

Smalls, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—This aptly named club features young and up-and-coming players jamming late into the night.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A convivial and crowded jazz club where the musicians are always top-shelf. Through April 2: **JERRY GONZALEZ & FORT APACHE.** John Coltrane experimented with all manner of genres, but he never got around to Latin music. Gonzalez and his band fill that gap with modal vamps and clamoring percussion. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—The Chestnut Room may resemble a hunting lodge decorated by Liberace, but the performances here are no joke. Vocalist **NANCY LA MOTT** concludes her engagment on April 2. Dining.

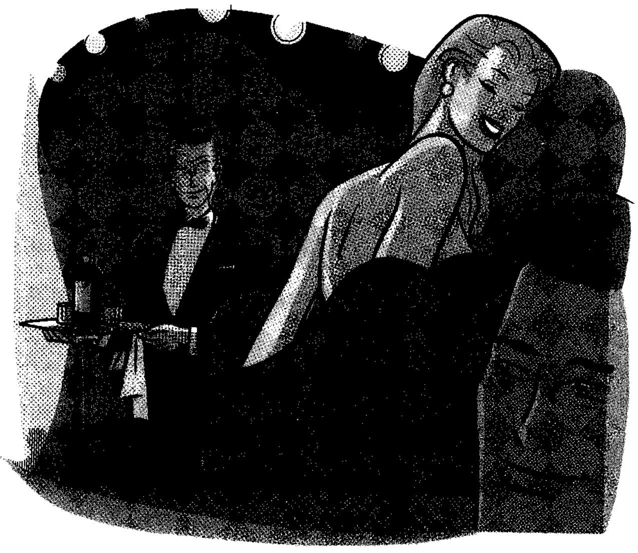
Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through April 2: the **CECIL TAYLOR** trio. For a long time, no one paid much attention to Taylor. He was a freak who played the way that Bartók, Stravinsky, Hindemith, and Debussy would have paid had they been jazz musicians. But masters often need apostles to prepare their way, and that's what the pianists McCoy Tyner and Keith Jarrett have been doing—knowingly or not—for the past few decades. Once in a while Taylor opens up enough to reveal his roots, and you can hear traces of Ellington, Gershwin, and Monk. Sax heavy **JOE LOVANO** takes over on April 4. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—March 29-April 1: **FRED HERSCH.** Hersch has received a lot of press as one of the first jazz musicians to come out as H.I.V.-positive and to actively campaign against AIDS, but the pianist's supple Bill Evans-infused romanticism has been drawing attention for years, as has his work with Joe Henderson, Charlie Haden, and Jane Ira Bloom. April 4: The **JEFF WILLIAMS** quintet.

ROCK, ETC.

Blarney Star, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—Home to fine Irish music every Friday night. March 31: The **STRAYAWAYS,** a fiddle-and-concertina combo.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—March 30-31: **ROBYN HITCHCOCK.** Best known as the founder of the Soft Boys, and for his own band, the Egyptians, Hitchcock remains an avatar of pop psychedelia. He's a crazy diamond, an oddball mix of Captain Beefheart and Syd Barrett. April 1-2: **JOHN CALE,** the *other* guy from the Velvet Underground. Cale is regularly dismissed as a straight man for Lou Reed's Warholian excess, but his long solo career (particularly his recent work with Brian Eno) proves that he's a challenging and influential avant-garde figure.



WALTER MINUS

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (429-8392)—March 30: **SKELETON KEY.** This band's front man, Erik Sanko, has worked with such desperadoes as John Lurie, Gavin Friday, and John Waite, but his own raunchy material sounds a bit like Nirvana meets Tom Waits.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—March 31-April 1: The **KINSEY REPORT.** One of the better modern-blues combos, this funky family (their father is Big Daddy Kinsey, one of the original Mississippi Delta bluesmen) easily shuffles rock, R. & B., and reggae into their music.

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—A comfortable lavender and stainless-steel paradise deep in the heart of the meat district. March 31: Rock with **RUN ON** and **STRATOTANKER.** Wednesday nights are given over to experimental d.j. spinoffs.

Continental Divide, 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Hipsters, punks, poseurs, N.Y.U. students, the occasional skinhead—a typical East Village bar. Live music nightly.

Don Hill's, 511 Greenwich St. (219-2850)—A tidy little SoHo bar with an above-average P.A. system and topnotch local bands on the docket. Friday night is Squeeze Box, a vinyl and velvet gay glamfest, hosted by Mistress Formika.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—"The Honeysuckles," a weekly live soap opera, runs every Monday, and the **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in on Thursdays. Dining.

Flannery's, 205 W. 14th St. (929-9589)—A well-scrubbed, amiable Irish pub with many of the classic features (pints of Guinness, non-stop TV sports) and a few of the near-classics (a CD jukebox, a portrait of Elvis).

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—March 31: A music-and-beer festival, featuring **FIVE CHINESE BROTHERS** and flowing vats of the malty stuff. **JOAN OSBORNE** is the main attraction on April 1. Osborne, a radiant singer-songwriter from Kentucky, is a late bloomer: when she released her first album, "Soul Show," in 1991, she was almost thirty years old. But she's making up for lost time. Her raspy, barn-burning voice has been compared to Bonnie Raitt's, and her knack for finding poignance and profundity in humdrum themes suggests Bruce Springsteen. On her new album, "Relish," she has no problem reconciling divine imagery and a healthy interest in worldly pleasures. Not bad for a young woman who discovered her calling during a drunken open-mike session at a cheesy downtown bar. **FUGAZI,** one of the best American bands most Americans have never heard of, is in on April 3-5. Fugazi makes a lean, smart sound full of driving, syncopated rhythms that bring to mind long-lost bands like the Clash and the Police. . . . ¶ Every Sunday night, the Swing Dance Society pays homage to the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Kaptain Banana, 101 Greene St. (343-9000)—French cabaret *en travesti* in SoHo. Three drag queens and eight dancers re-create the Court of Versailles, a carnival in Rio, Marlene Dietrich, and the Andrews Sisters. There's also a singing gorilla. Dining.

Limelight, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—The rock-and-roll church. Wednesday night is Disco 2000, a fin-de-siècle dance party.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—March 30: **GUIDED BY VOICES,** a ragtag outfit from Dayton, Ohio, whose ringleader, Robert Pollard, recently quit his job as a fourth-grade teacher. The band's 1994 release, "Bee Thousand," was a playground of vérité chaos that had mature, sane people walking around humming songs like "The Goldheart Mountaintop Queen Directory." April 1: **RICHIE HAVENS** and **JILL SOBULE.** This unusual double bill brings together the Woodstock veteran turned jingle singer and a slick, up-and-coming young songwriter.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—March 30: **SYBIL VANE.** This four-piece outfit, fronted by a female singer with the romance-novel name April Devereaux, plays big, theatrical noise rock, punctuated by the occasional acoustic guitar and Devereaux's whooping vocals. March 31-April 1: **URBAN DANCE SQUAD.** Funk and rap might seem like unlikely exports from Holland, but this interracial combo pulls it off with a considerable degree of authenticity. **MAGNETIC FIELDS,** in on April 4, offers deadpan melodies and dry synth-pop soundscapes à la Yaz.

Nell's, 246 W. 14th St. (675-1567)—A Victorian-style club, home to an eclectic crowd of downtown youngsters dancing to throbbing funk and techno-pop. Monday night is Funky Buddha, with live bands and d.j. Derek Corley "on the wheels."

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. Tuesday nights, S.O.B.'s presents Soul Kitchen, an evening of seventies funk and R. & B. for devotees of Don Cornelius. Thursday nights belong to Giant Step, a roving collective of musicians, rappers, and d.j.s who mix jazz, funk, and hip-hop. Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Back in the seventies, **GRAHAM PARKER** (in on March 31) was among a handful of singer-songwriters who dragged the ruggedly lyrical tradition of Bob Dylan and Van Morrison kicking and screaming into the punk era. Parker's first album, released in 1976, actually predates Elvis Costello's début by a year, but he hasn't matched Costello's consistency over the years. His new record, "Twelve Haunted Episodes" is good, though—packed with terse, acerbic love songs.

Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"R. B. Kitaj," a retrospective of more than seventy paintings by the American expatriate who for nearly four decades has lived and worked in London. Through May 14. . . . ¶ "I Tell My Heart: The Art of Horace Pippin," a selection of paintings by a self-taught black artist from Pennsylvania (1888-1946). Works by Jacob Lawrence, Bill Traylor, John Kane, Grandma Moses, and Arnold Friedman are also on view. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—A retrospective of video installations, sculptural objects, walk-in environments, and sound pieces by Bruce Nauman. Through May 23. . . . ¶ "Kandinsky: Compositions." Wassily Kandinsky, the Russian painter who invented abstractionism, groped his way there with gingerly care, marking the milestones in his evolution with a numbered series of large-scale "Compositions." In this quiet little blockbuster exhibition, the museum has united the seven surviving canvases for the first time. Enhanced by preliminary studies and by photographs of the lost works, the exhibit documents the progress of Kandinsky's expanding vision with elegance and precision. Through April 25. . . . ¶ A selection of drawings from the sixties by such sculptors as Eva Hesse, Robert Smithson, Dan Flavin, Kenneth Snelson, and Sol LeWitt. . . . ¶ Recent photographic acquisitions, including works by Rudy Burckhardt, Hans Bellmer, Jan Groover, Gilles Peress, and Mariana Yampolsky. Through April 11. . . . ¶ "Max Beckmann Prints" includes lithographs, drypoints, and woodcuts from throughout the German Expressionist's career. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A Ross Bleckner retrospective treats us to liberal helpings of the painter's familiar stew of sublimity and kitsch—the work of a soul profoundly divided between the raptures of a mystic and the whimsies of an interior decorator. Much of it is sickly gorgeous; some of it betrays a deep spiritual longing. Through May 14. . . . ¶ A ten-year survey of the work of Felix Gonzalez-Torres. This Cuban-born Neo-Conceptualist supplements his typically sparse or abstract imagery (stacks of paper, sometimes bearing cryptic messages; spills of hard candies and of bubble gum) with parenthetical subtitles that allude to AIDS, politics, and more personal themes. He borrows freely from minimalist and Conceptualist modes of presentation, which makes for an austere, even pseudoscientific look. Through May 10. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway—Fifty-six paintings by Antoni Tàpies, in a retrospective of the Catalan artist's career. Through April 23. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—All the floors of the Biennial exhibition are now open. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Spiders!" Are you ready for this arachnorama? Twelve live tarantulas are at the center of the web. You can also get caught up in anatomical diagrams, habitat dioramas (who knew?), exoskeleton models, and courtship videos (yecch). (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

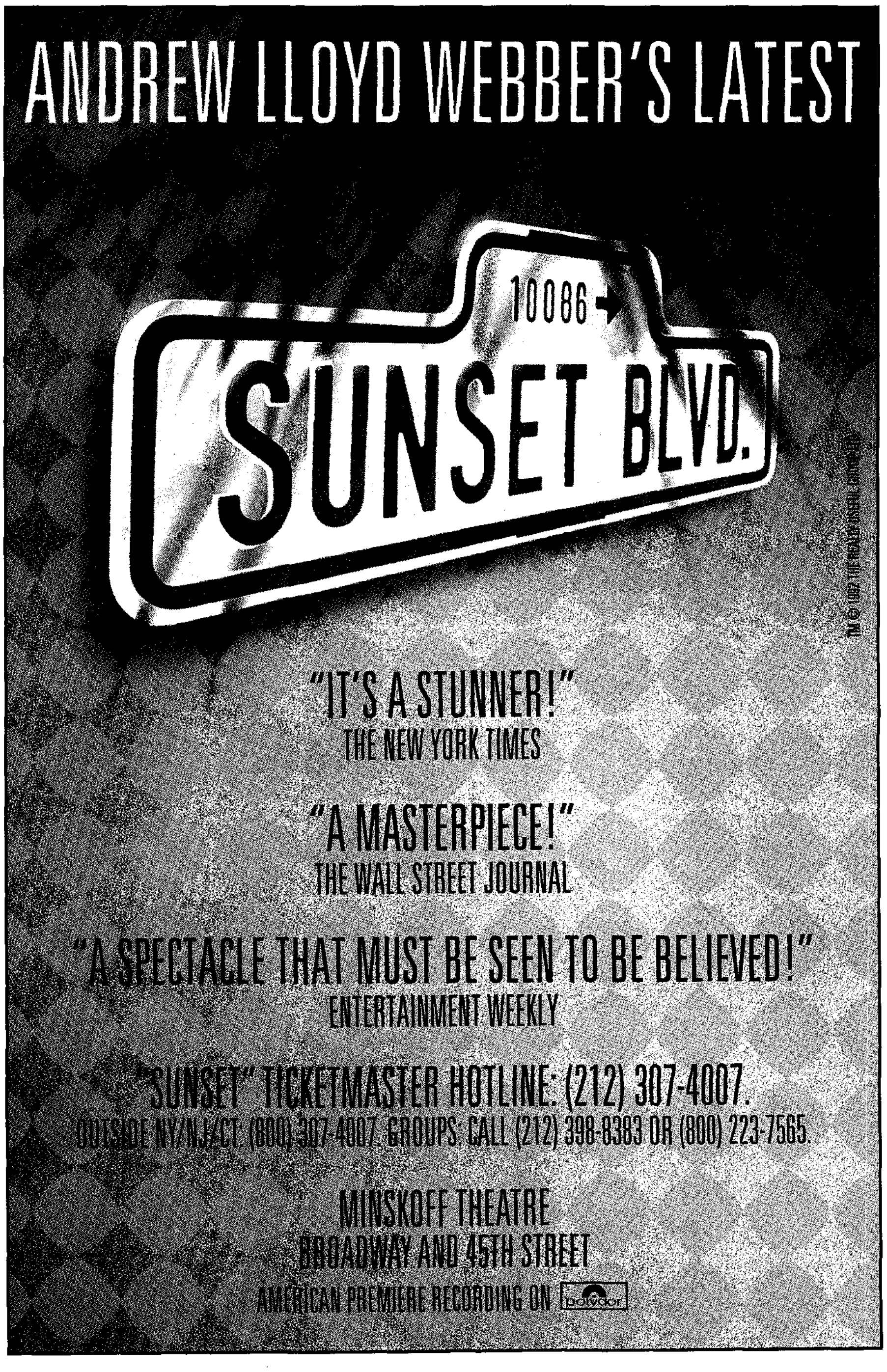
BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—The greatly expanded African galleries have reopened, and they now contain more than two hundred and fifty works. . . . ¶ Two other displays are new: the Arts of the Pacific gallery, showing works from Melanesia, and the Arts of the Andes, on view in the Great Hall. . . . ¶ "Thomas Cole: Landscape into History" presents arcadian and allegorical visions of New World wilderness by the English-born founder of the Hudson River school. Through April 2. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"New Finds, Old Treasures." Eighty examples of Chinese ceramics, including two jars from a previously unknown Neolithic culture (circa 2000 B.C.). Through June 18. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

FRICK COLLECTION, 1 E. 70th St.—"Romantics, Neoclassicists, Realists: European Drawings from the Stanford University Museum of Art" includes works from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by Fragonard, Turner, Delacroix, Fuseli, and others. Through May 14. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

MORGAN LIBRARY, 29 E. 36th St.—"The Painted Page: Italian Renaissance Book Illumination, 1450-1550" demonstrates that Renaissance artists expressed themselves just as exuberantly in illuminated manuscripts as they did in painting and sculpture. Every item on display is superb. A map of Italy in Ptolemy's "Geography" has the coloristic bravado of an Ellsworth Kelly; the massive choir books from Milan, Lodi, and Cesena have the impressive heft of Richard Serras. Through May 7. . . . ¶ "In Praise of Aldus Manutius: A Quincentenary Exhibition," a large group of books from the house of the master printer. Through April 9. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

MUSEUM OF AMERICAN FOLK ART, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—The art of Minnie Evans (1892-1987), often inspired by dreams and religious visions, is on view in an exhibit of more than sixty paintings. Through April 2. . . . ¶ "The Gift Is Small, The Love Is Great," a show of Pennsylvania German gift frakturs (illuminated documents). Through April 2. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)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National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The Academy's hundred-and-seventieth annual exhibition includes works by Paul Cadmus, Jacob Lawrence, Rosemarie Beck, and Marianna Pineda. Through April 2. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadow Park—"Common Ground/Uncommon Vision," a broad selection of American folk art, including paintings, sculptures, drawings, toys, and other functional objects. Through April 9. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5. . . . **note:** A concurrent show of work from the same collection is at the PaineWebber Building, Sixth Ave. at 52nd St., through April 14. Open Mondays through Fridays, 8 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Joe Andoe—These seven monumental paintings of horses, by an Oklahoma artist, have the hyperreal impact of early photography. The gray-and-umber palette creates a spooky, twilit realm of phosphorescence and gives the horses the quiet dignity of Velazquez' royal sitters—all of which makes the final canvas, painted in a blinding shade of lipstick red, a retinal shock. Through April 15. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Polly Apfelbaum—Wall works and drawings that incorporate bedsheets, pieces of dyed fabric, and fragments of photographs. Through April 22. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St.)

John Bowman—Imaginary aerial and close-up views of cities, inspired by the artist's recent travels in Central Europe. Through April 1. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

Peter Cain—Two paintings, two manipulated photos, and several drawings that continue this young artist's slice-and-reassemble treatment of auto imagery. Through April 25. (Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Andy Goldsworthy—Two installations: a cone of green Vermont slate, and a group of rocks from Scotland with natural indentations that hold pools of red water. Also on view are large color photographs of other works made in Scotland. Through April 22. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

Sidney Goodman—New charcoals, pastels, and watercolors by an exceptional veteran draftsman. Through April 29. (Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St.)

Al Held—New paintings in which the artist has dispensed with his complex depictions of geometric shapes in multiple planes. Now he's into caves and hangarlike spaces with luminous, enigmatic vanishing points. Through April 22. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Valerie Hird—A recent visit to Turkey inspired the New England artist to create landscapes with the bold geometry and dazzling colors of Anatolian kilims. The works on paper, particularly, beguile the eye with enamel-like surfaces of a coppery brilliance. Through April 8. (Haime, 41 E. 57th St.)

Paul Jenkins—New paintings that combine his familiar poured pigments with an earlier staining technique and a recent impasto style. Through April 8. (Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St.)

Gwen John (1876-1939)—Drawings, watercolors, and an oil from the artist's estate, on view for the first time. Included are a portrait of Rodin, with whom she had a ten-year love affair, and several watercolors of cats. Through April 1. (Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St.)

Alex Katz—Small landscapes and portraits of women, some in oil on masonite and some in pencil on paper. Through April 1. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Barbara Novak—The forty-nine watercolors of flowers in this refreshing show, all modestly scaled and all painted between 1984 and

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Self-portrait by Nan Goldin (Marks).

1994, have the subdued glow of a garden on a misty morning. Bold yet delicate, carefully observed yet spontaneous, Novak's work is reminiscent of flower painting by such early-nineteenth-century Japanese masters as Suzuki Nanrei. Through April 29. (Jensen, 48 E. 73rd St. Open Mondays.)

George Negroponte—Abstract paintings with mainly vertical brushstrokes surrounded by solid fields of dark blues and ochres. Through April 22. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Giuseppe Penone / Dan Graham—A wall drawing and sculptures using trees indigenous to the forests around Turin. / An installation titled "Opposing Mirrors and Video Monitors on Time Delay" (1974). Through April 22. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Peter Poskas—The clapboard buildings, wild grasses, and hard light of Monhegan Island, Maine, appear in this realist's new paintings. Through April 1. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St.)

Martin Puryear—Four large wood sculptures and one large tar-and-mesh piece. Through April 15. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Milton Resnick—New oils by the veteran abstract painter. Through April 1. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Donald Sultan—Brand-new paintings, ranging from one to eight feet square, of dominoes, butterflies, fruits, and flowers. Through April 1. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

"Alternative Visions II"—An interesting concept, which almost works: fourth- and third-century-B.C. Greek vases from southern Italy juxtaposed with drawings by modern masters. The Classical influences on a late, pornographic Picasso are obvious; more subtle is the way a Matisse charcoal of grape leaves echoes the shapely dignity of a bronze pitcher. But drawings by Franz Kline and David Smith seem to have been included simply because they're bold, black, and for sale. Through April 1. (Mathes, 41 E. 57th St.)

"The City: New York Visions"—Works dating from the turn of the century to the present, among them some fascinating surprises: a modest little pencil drawing of a warehouse, by the pre-jazz Stuart Davis; a sweet view of Central Park in the snow, by Edward Stieglitz, the photographer's father; the glistening, hard-edged " 'New York' Still Life," by Tamara de Lempicka. Through April 1. (ACA, 41 E. 57th St.)

"On the Brink 1900-2000: The Turning of Two Centuries"—Disease, technology, war, apocalypse—all the favorite millenarian concerns—are addressed in the works of the new fin-de-siècle artists (Sue Coe, Luis Cruz Azaceta, Gary Panter, David Wojnarowicz) and those of the old (James Ensor, Käthe Kollwitz, Edvard Munch, Egon Schiele). Through May 26. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

"Endurance"—"It must give pleasure," Wallace Stevens said of art. More often for the artists represented in this indispensable historical show, it gave pain. Chris Burden got a friend to shoot him in the arm with a rifle ("Shoot," 1971), crawled across fifty feet of broken glass ("Through the Night Softly," 1973), and had himself crucified on the back end of a Volkswagen Beetle ("Transfixed," 1974). In a more poetic vein, Marina Abramovic and her former partner, the artist Ulay, walked from opposite ends of the Great Wall of China, taking ninety days to meet in the middle ("The Lovers," 1989). The exhibition also includes photo-documentation of important performances by Vito Acconci, Joseph Beuys, Yoko Ono, and many lesser-known yet fascinating figures. Through April 22. (Exit Art, 548 Broadway. Open Friday and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Carolyn Brady—Watercolors set at Versailles, Giverny, and the artist's home in the south of France. Through April 19. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Deborah Kass—In "My Andy: A Retrospective," the artist embraces her Warhol obsession, with caustically funny results. She has given Warhol's monumental "Ethel Scull 36 Times" (1963)—the artist's homage to one of his early supporters—an up-to-the-minute revision, in "Alice Kosmin 36 Times." Kass's humor can be blunt and even a little cheap, but it packs a punch: her womanly response to "Empire" (1964), Warhol's eight-hour single-shot movie of the Empire State Building, is "Tunnel," an unblinking sixty-minute video gaze into the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel. Through April 8. (Freire, 130 Prince St.)

Kocheisen + Hullmann—Paintings and sculptures by a German team, who make a collaborative decision on a format, technique, and theme and then retire to separate studios to create the double works. Through April 5. (Nosei, 100 Prince St.)

June Leaf—New paintings, drawings, and sculptures relating to the artist's split states of mind, which come from dividing her time between northern Nova Scotia and New York City. Through April 22. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

Leslie Lerner—Narrative paintings in acrylic, tempera, and various varnishes, from a series titled "My Life in France." Through April 15. (Rosenberg + Kaufman, 115 Wooster St.)

Sarah Lucas—Sculptures by a British bad girl. The crude sexual humor (melons as breasts, a tin of pressed fish as a vagina) aims for cheekiness but hits obnoxiousness. "Supersensible" is the title; "Dumb and Dumber" is more like it. Through April 1. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

Kay Rosen—Language-based pencil-on-paper drawings: puns, palindromes, linguistic acrobatics. Through April 23. (Morris, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Frank Stella—Enormous new paintings that recall the wonderful era when bigger sometimes really was better. The artist seems to have flattened out his relief paintings of the seventies and eighties, restoring the two-dimensionality of his sixties work while still exploiting a virtually trompe-l'oeil illusionism. A tour de force. Through April 15. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

Jessica Stockholder—Assemblage sculptures made with laundry bins, pillows, light bulbs, yarn, and other homely materials. Through April 29. (Gorney, 100 Greene St.)

Richard Tuttle—New wall-mounted sculptures. Tuttle gained renown in the late sixties and early seventies for his fragile, sometimes virtually invisible works. These recent decorative works—in latex, plastic foam, cloth, and chicken wire—seem almost rococo by comparison. Through April 29. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Thomas Woodruff—"The Secret Charts," a new series of paintings, labelled "Figure A" to "Figure Z," which are complex, theatrically rendered amalgams of sources ranging from Warner Bros. cartoons to Victorian mourning jewelry. Through April 22. (P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway.)

Andrea Zittel—"Platform Bed" and "Pit Bed," furniture sculptures by a young artist intent on making practical art. Her previous works were coldly Bauhausian; now she has taken a psychedelic-sixties turn. Through April 8. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

"Me"—A self-obsessed smorgasbord of paintings, photographs, and drawings by Chuck Close, Alan Belcher, Tina Barney, Sally Mann, Hannah Wilke, Sean Mellyn, and others. Through May 6. (Arstark, 568 Broadway.)

Group Show—Photo-documentation and relics of performance pieces and body works from the early sixties to the present. Among the highlights are Charles Ray's "All My Clothes" (1973), sixteen color photographs in which the artist models the whole of his incredibly dweeby wardrobe, and Carolee Schneemann's "Eye Body" (1963), black-and-white photos that meld performance art and Abstract Expressionism. Through April 15. (Karg, 100 Greene St.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Artful Documents

Dorothea Lange took pictures of the poor, the forgotten, the abandoned, and the racially stigmatized without being sloppy or sentimental or contrived—which is a feat for any artist who seeks to represent the disenfranchised. In "Dorothea Lange: American Photographs," at the International Center of Photography (1130 Fifth Avenue, at 94th Street; through April 30), her respect for her subjects comes across as clearly as her instinct for expressive gesture and her skill at eliminating distractions. The show covers Lange's documentary work from the thirties through the fifties. It includes plenty of lesser-known images and offers new perspectives on such classics as "Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California" (1936). We get to see other shots of the woman and her children and, even more telling, several different prints of the famous photo: to make the published picture more effective, Lange altered it by removing a distracting thumb.

Lange was a photographer on a social mission, not an aesthetic one; she always insisted that she was creating a record of lives rather than making fine art. Her triumph came, of course, in doing both.

Bernd and Hilla Becher—"Industrial Facades," a new series of six-part works, in the clinical, detached manner characteristic of the artists. Through April 15. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

James Casebere—Color images of the artist's architectural models of prison interiors. Through April 22. (Klein, 40 Wooster St.)

Lois Conner—Single- and multi-panel platinum contact prints of landscapes in Vietnam and Cambodia, which exhibit a startling tonal range and a richness of detail reminiscent of nineteenth-century photography. Through April 15. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St.)

Ted Croner—New York City night scenes of moving cars and luminous buildings, taken in the late forties and early fifties. Through April 8. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

Lynn Davis—Twenty years' worth of landscape, architectural, and nude studies. Through May 13. (Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

Nan Goldin—The artist's reworked "Ballad of Sexual Dependency" (1982), a forty-five-minute color-slide-with-soundtrack presentation, is being screened three times a day, at 1, 3, and 5. Also on view are new medium-format pictures taken in Tokyo, Berlin, Salzburg, and New York, and twelve large-scale works. Through April 16. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Dorothea Lange (1895-1965)—"American Photographs," a selection of works from the thirties through the fifties. Through April 30. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Maggie Steber and **Alex Webb**—Two separate groups of photographs taken in Haiti: Steber's are primarily from 1994, Webb's from 1986-88. Through April 5. (Leica, 670 Broadway. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

The Fleeing Dutchwoman

When Elly Ameling announced that she would give her New York farewell recital on April 9, at Alice Tully Hall, the date sold out so quickly that Lincoln Center was moved to add a penultimate concert, on April 2. Few non-operatic singers have built such a devoted following. Except for a brief flirtation with Mozart in the mid-seventies, the Dutch soprano has limited her work to recitals, oratorios, and orchestral engagements. (She belongs to a distinguished line of Dutch singers who have forsworn opera for the jewelled detail of lieder.) During the thirty-four years that Ameling has spent applying her pure tone and precise expression to the concert repertoire, she has often been supported by pianists Dalton Baldwin (who will assist her on April 2) and Rudolf Jansen (her partner on April 9). Her recordings will live on, and Philips has recently released a lovely four-disk collection of her Schubert interpretations with the Messrs. Baldwin and Jansen. But time stands still for no soprano. Ameling's decision to retire is typical of the common sense, good taste, and decorum that are crucial to the lieder singer's art.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

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OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**TOSCA,** with Elizabeth Holleque, Luciano Pavarotti, and Juan Pons; conducted by Daniel Oren. (March 29 at 8 and April 1 at 1:30.) . . . **LA TRAVIATA,** with Ainhoa Arteta, Francisco Araiza, and Mr. Pons; John Fiore. (March 30 at 8.) . . . **MADAMA BUTTERFLY,** with Diana Soviero, Yun Deng, Michael Sylvester, and Richard Stilwell; Plácido Domingo. (March 31 at 8.) . . . **PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE,** with Frederica von Stade, Marilyn Horne, Dwayne Croft, Victor Braun, and Robert Lloyd; James Levine. (April 1 and April 4 at 8.) . . . **THE GHOSTS OF VERSAILLES,** by John Corigliano, with Teresa Stratas, Ms. Horne, Allan Glassman, Gino Quilico, and Hector Vasquez; Mr. Levine. (April 3 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

New York City Opera—**CARMEN.** (March 29 at 8.) . . . **MADAMA BUTTERFLY.** (March 31 at 8.) . . . **LA TRAVIATA.** (April 1 at 1:30.) . . . **THE MERRY WIDOW.** (April 1 at 8 and April 2 at 1:30.) . . . **HARVEY MILK,** by Stewart Wallace, with a libretto by Michael Korie. (April 4 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Kurt Masur directs two of Brahms' choral masterpieces, "Schicksalslied" and "Ein Deutsches Requiem," with the Westminster Symphonic Choir and soloists Sylvia McNair (soprano) and Håkan Hagegård (baritone). (Avery Fisher Hall. March 29-April 1 at 8. . . . **NOTE:** Music lovers interested in the vicissitudes of American reactions to the music of Brahms should

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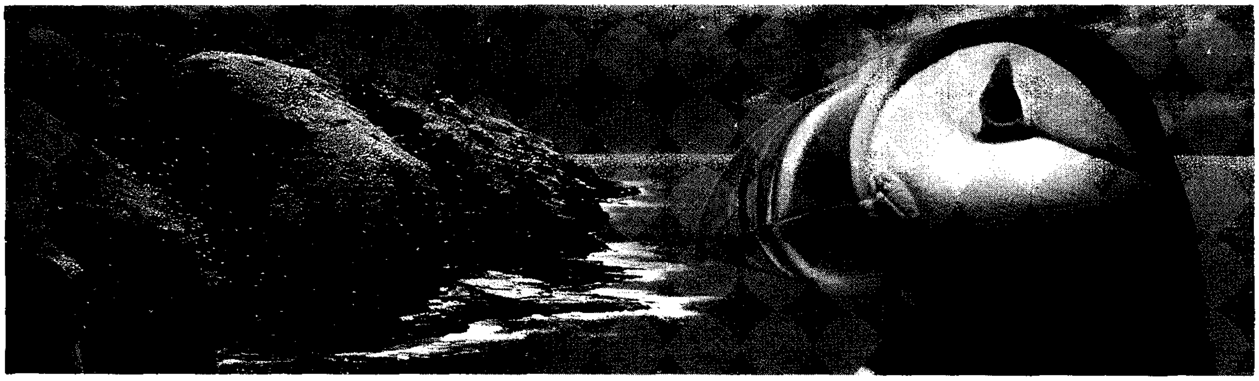

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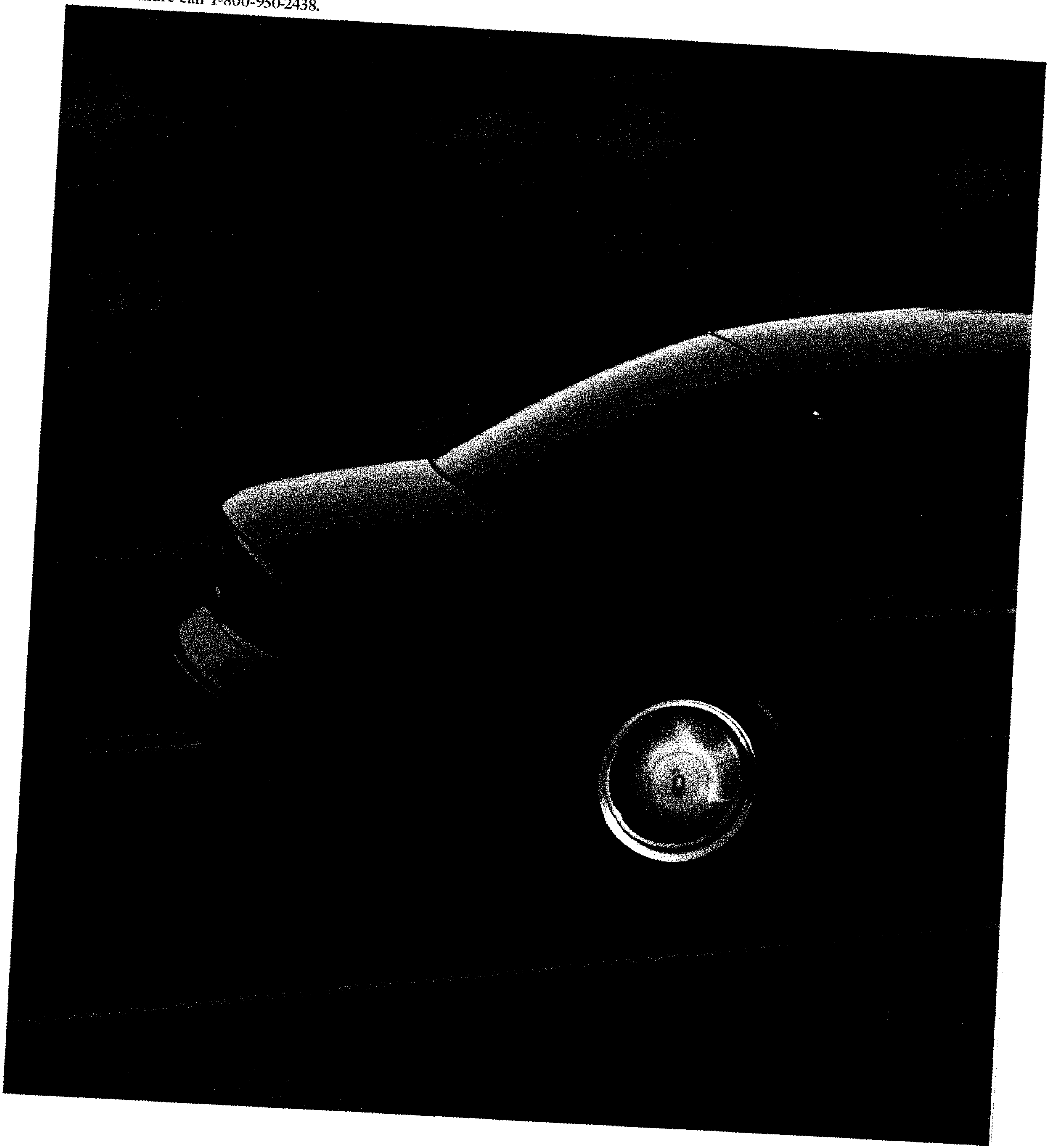

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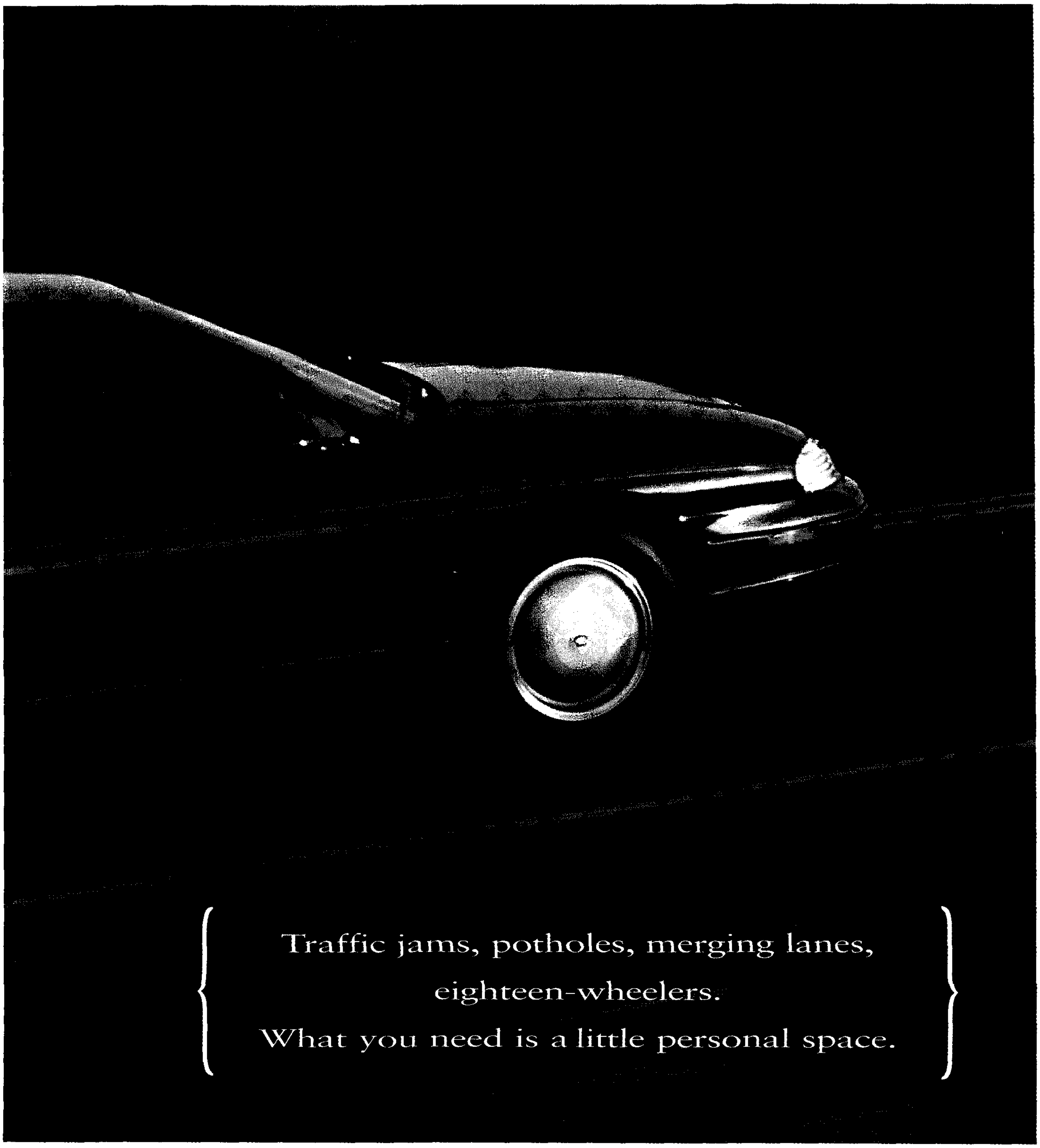
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visit the exhibit on display through April 29 in the Bruno Walter Gallery, on the grand-promenade level of Avery Fisher Hall.)

Les Arts Florissants—William Christie leads the French early-music ensemble in concerts of Baroque music. March 29 at 8: Sacred music from the France of Louis XIV, by Couperin and Charpentier. . . . ¶ March 31 at 7 and April 1 at 8: Semi-staged performances of Purcell's masque "King Arthur." . . . ¶ April 2 at 3: The much admired harpsichordist Christophe Rousset makes his United States début, assisting Mr. Christie in a program of music for two harpsichords, by Gaspard LeRoux, Couperin, and Boccherini. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.)

Collegiate Chorale—The choir observes Haydn's two-hundred-and-sixty-third birthday with a performance of "The Creation," using a new edition that approximates as closely as possible the state of the oratorio at its first London performance, in 1800. Robert Bass directs the chorus, the Orchestra of St. Luke's, soprano Marvis Martin, tenor Donald Kaasch, and bass John Cheek. (Carnegie Hall. March 31 at 8.)

Choir and Orchestra of Trinity Church—Performing Bach's "St. John Passion." (Trinity Church, Broadway at Wall St. 602-0873. April 2 at 3.)

Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra Amsterdam—At Carnegie Hall, Riccardo Chailly conducting. April 2 at 3: Bartók's "Concerto for Orchestra" and Strauss's "Ein Heldenleben." . . . ¶ April 3 at 8: Berg's Piano Sonata (in an orchestral arrangement by Theo Verbey), Stravinsky's "Symphony in Three Movements," Prokofiev's Suite from "The Love for Three Oranges," and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 (with Maria João Pires, who, after spending four years sequestered on a primitive Portuguese farm, found that the exercise of milking goats had proved beneficial to her trill technique).

Philadelphia Orchestra—Mstislav Rostropovich conducts Haydn's Symphony No. 104 and Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5. (Avery Fisher Hall. April 3 at 8.)

Saint Thomas Choir and Concert Royal—Performing Purcell's "Ode on Saint Cecilia's Day 1692" and Te Deum and Jubilate Deo, among other works. Gerre Hancock directs. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. 757-7013. April 4 at 7:30.)

RECITALS

Yehuda Hanani and James Tocco—The cellist and the pianist perform all five of Beethoven's cello sonatas. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 29 at 7:30.)

Ivo Pogorelich—Pianist, performing works by Mozart and Schumann (his "Symphonic Études"). (Carnegie Hall. March 29 and April 4 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Violinist Robert Chen, cellist Christopher Costanza, and pianist Sung-Mi Im perform works by Ravel, Beethoven, and Brahms. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. March 30 at 7:30 and April 2 at 4.)

Piano and Winds—Concluding concerts of a chamber-music series anchored by pianist András Schiff; with oboist Heinz Holliger, flutist Philippe Racine, clarinettist Elmar Schmid, bassoonist Klaus Thunemann, French hornist Radovan Vlatkovic, and pianist Bruno Canino. March 30 at 8: Quintets by Beethoven and Sándor Veress, among other works. . . . ¶ April 2 at 3: The program includes quintets by Mozart and Holliger. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

Elly Ameling, at Alice Tully Hall.

Egyptian Baroque—Just kidding—though it does take place at the Temple of Dendur. Flutist Paula Robison and harpsichordist Kenneth Cooper are joined by numerous colleagues for a program of works by Bach, Vivaldi, Couperin, and Rameau. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. March 31-April 1 at 7.)

Lark String Quartet—Playing quartets by Beethoven (in G Major, Op. 18, No. 2) and Schoenberg (his First), as well as Mozart's Clarinet Quintet (with Charles Neidich assisting). (Weill Recital Hall. March 31 at 8.)

Mandolin Mania—Mandolinists and those who love them will descend on the Warwick Hotel (65 W. 54th St.) on April 1, beginning at 9 A.M., to take in vender's exhibits, instrument displays, musical demonstrations, and shoptalk. (Call 1-301 530-1749 for information.) The following afternoon, Evan Marshall offers a concert of solo and chamber works for the instrument. (Merkin Concert Hall. April 2 at 3.)

Schubertiade—The 92nd Street Y's annual Schubert festival opens with a wide-ranging program of lieder, part-songs, and piano music; with soprano Benita Valente, baritone Hermann Prey, classical guitarist Benjamin Verdery, pianist David Golub, and the duo-piano team of John and Richard Contiguglia. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. April 1 at 8.)

Yale Music Spectrum—Yale-related musicians offer a program of Bach arias (with baritone Richard Lalli) and chamber works by Hindemith and Brahms (his Piano Quintet). (Merkin Concert Hall. April 1 at 8:30.)

Garrick Ohlsson—In the third installment of his traversal of Chopin's complete solo-piano music, the pianist performs the Fourth Ballade, the Barcarolle, the Berceuse, and the ultra-familiar Polonaise in A-Flat Major (Op. 53), among other works. (Alice Tully Hall. April 2 at 2.)

Barros Classical Consort—The early-instrument ensemble plays chamber works by Haydn, Boccherini, Mozart, and Beethoven. (Christie's, Park Ave. at 59th St. April 2 at 2:30. No tickets necessary.)

André Watts—The pianist's program includes Beethoven's D-Major Sonata (Op. 10, No. 3) and Chopin's Ballade No. 2. (Avery Fisher Hall. April 2 at 3.)

Gothic Voices—The earlier the music, the greater the speculation about how to perform it. This English vocal quartet tends toward the distant recesses of the Middle Ages; if there's room for dissent about the group's interpretative choices, there's no questioning its execution. The group's thirteen recordings (all on the Hyperion label) exhibit expressive subtlety, clear textures, and exceptionally accurate intonation. In its New York-début recital, the foursome presents sacred and secular music from twelfth- and thirteenth-century France, Spain, and England. Presented by Music Before 1800. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 666-9266. April 2 at 4.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Presenting Beethoven's C-Minor String Trio, Weber's Clarinet Quintet (Op. 34, with David Shifrin), and Mozart's E-Flat-Major String Quintet (K. 614). (Alice Tully Hall. April 2 at 5 and April 4 at 7:30.)

Elly Ameling—In her penultimate New York recital, the soprano performs a program of Schubert lieder, with pianist Dalton Baldwin assisting. (Alice Tully Hall. April 2 at 8. . . . **note:** Music lovers who fail to procure tickets to this recital or to Ms. Ameling's definitive farewell, on April 9, might wish to attend the soprano's master class for young singers, at Lincoln Center's Walter Reade Theatre, on April 17. For information, call 875-5050.)

Imogen Cooper—The pianist performs works by Schubert, Janáček, and Debussy. (Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. April 3 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

Third Street's Century—Founded in 1894, the Third Street Music School Settlement was the first music school of its kind in the country, and it set the pattern for hundreds of community settlement schools. It's still very active a century later, with more than three thousand young musicians benefitting from its offerings each year. (The school's relocation in 1974 accounts for the bizarre contradiction of name and address). Its century's worth of graduates includes the songwriter Irving Caesar, the conductor Sidney Harth, the pianist Anthony di Bonaventura, the late violinists Josef Gingold and Samuel Dushkin, and—perhaps most important—generations of music lovers of the sort no longer being prepared by public-school programs. Some of Third Street's current students will join the pros—violinist Corey Cerovsek, singer and pianist Bobby Short, violist Michael Tree (of the Guarneri Quartet), and dancer Dudley Williams (of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre)—in a salute to this pillar of New York's musical community. (Alice Tully Hall. April 3 at 7:30.)

Leonardo Trio—Performing piano trios by Beethoven (in E-Flat Major, Op. 70, No. 2), Schumann (in D Minor), and Wolfgang Rihm (his "Fremde Szene II"). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. April 4 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Losing Their Religion—Those who once looked on baseball's Opening Day as a legitimate day off for a sacred rite are probably looking elsewhere this week. The strike/lockout/shutdown—whatever—is approaching its two-hundred-and-fiftieth day, and the only good stories to come from it (besides Michael Jordan's return to the air) are ones of absence: the Baltimore Orioles have refused to field a team even for exhibition games, and longtime Detroit Tigers manager Sparky Anderson has refused to manage. If all goes according to plan—which seemed probable at press time—the ersatz Mets will have their home opener on April 4 against the Colorado Rockies, and the Yankees on April 10 against the Minnesota Twins. In both cases, absence is the best policy.

Backpedalling to Glory—The New York Road Runners Club sponsors its April Fool's Mile, in which participants proceed backward from start to finish. The race begins at the Delacorte Oval, in Central Park, at noon. To register for the event, call 860-4455.

Slouching Toward Sligo—The W. B. Yeats Society's stateside preview of its summer-school activities in Sligo, Ireland, includes lectures, a documentary film about the poet's life, a slide-show evocation of the country-side, and a poetry workshop led by the Irish expatriate poet Paul Muldoon. (Liederkranz Club, 6 E. 87th St. April 1, from 10 to 6. For information, call 1-718 601-8386.)

Lighten Up—Lately, the French have been reilluminating the City of Light. Their experts, along with American lighting designers and architects, offer a symposium on city lighting, public policy, and the "shaping of luminous zones." (New School, 66 W. 12th St. April 4 at 6:30. For reservations, call 229-8955.)

The Circus Is Coming—Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey roars and soars with Bengal-tiger trainer Gunther Gebel-Williams, fifth-generation acrobats, a Bulgarian motorcycle trickster, Russian bounders, young Chicago tumblers on elephants, and the well-worn Wheel of Death. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6741. March 29 at noon; March 30 at 10:30; March 31 at 1; April 1-2 at 10:30,

TOM BLOOM

2:30, and 7:30; and April 3 at 7:30. Through April 30.) . . . ¶ The Cirque du Soleil brings its blue-and-yellow big top to the southern tip of Manhattan, with "Alegría," its new show. (Battery Park City. 952-1200. March 29-31 and April 4 at 8; April 1 at 4:30 and 8:30; and April 2 at 1 and 5.)

Quilt Crazy—The Staten Island Historical Society presents a quilt festival at the Early American enclave in Richmond Town. Antique quilts (with forthright names like Union Square, Log Cabin, and Rising Sun) will be displayed along with recent handiwork in new patterns (like Strippers in the Town Square) that demonstrate the continuing evolution of the art. Lectures and readings supplement the display, and three workshops (on April 1 at 1, 2, and 3) offer children a quilting experience using glue and paper in place of needle and thread. (441 Clarke Ave., Staten Island. 1-718 351-1611. March 29-April 2, from 1 to 5.)

Readings—March 29 at 6:30: Actors read selections from "Roy Blount's Book of Southern Humor." Larry Keith reads Dave Barry's "False Alarm," Dana Ivey reads Flannery O'Connor's "A Late Encounter with the Enemy," Isaiah Sheffer reads Joseph Mitchell's "I Blame It All on Mamma," and Arthur French reads Ted Poston's "Papa Was a Democrat." (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) . . . ¶ March 29 at 8: Robert Pinsky reads from his translation of Dante's Inferno. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799.) . . . ¶ March 31 at 8: Dignitaries including Glennda Orgasm, Linda Simpson, Gary Indiana, and David Sedaris read from "Straight to Hell: The Manhattan Review of Unnatural Acts," a collection of selections from the journal edited by the late, great Boyd McDonald. (A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ April 3 at 6:30: Irish poet Eavan Boland reads from essays in her latest book, "Object Lessons: The Life of the Woman and the Poet in Our Time." (Glucksman Ireland House, New York University, 1 Washington Mews. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ April 3 at 7:30: Pete Hamill reads from his memoir, "A Drinking Life." (Barnes & Noble, Sixth Ave. at 21st St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ April 3 at 7:30: Poets Amiri Baraka and Gwendolyn Brooks read from their work. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 645-5848.) . . . ¶ April 3 at 8: Sandra Cisneros, author of "The House on Mango Street," and Grace Paley, the first official New York State Writer and a self-confessed troublemaker, read from their work. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

Talks—April 1 at 2: Historians Barbara and Michael Foster look back at the life of Adah Isaacs Menken, a Broadway star of Irish, French, Jewish, and, secretly, African blood, who in the eighteen-sixties was considered the avatar of glamour and allure. (Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. No tickets necessary beyond museum admission.) . . . ¶ April 2 at 3: Shakespearean scholar Rabbi Herbert Bronstein discusses the way a religious Jew should approach Shakespeare, in the Hebrew Union College series Wrestling with Angels. (1 W. 4th St. 674-5300, ext. 205.) . . . ¶ April 4 at 5: Art historian Lynn Springer Roberts and Jeannine Falino, a curator at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, discuss Omar Ramsden and Arthur J. Stone, two master silversmiths, whose elaborate altar goblets, fruit spoons, cigarette cases, etc., are the subject of two exhibitions at the Bard Graduate Center. (18 W. 86th St. For more information, call 501-3013.)

Walks—April 1 at 1:30: Historian Arthur Marks visits the homes of Fiorello LaGuardia, Eleanor Roosevelt, and other Greenwich Village denizens. The tour ends with afternoon tea. For more information, call 254-1200. . . . ¶ April 2 at 1: Citywalks Tours revisits the sites of Manhattan's first settlements, from City Hall to the Battery. For more information, call 989-2456.

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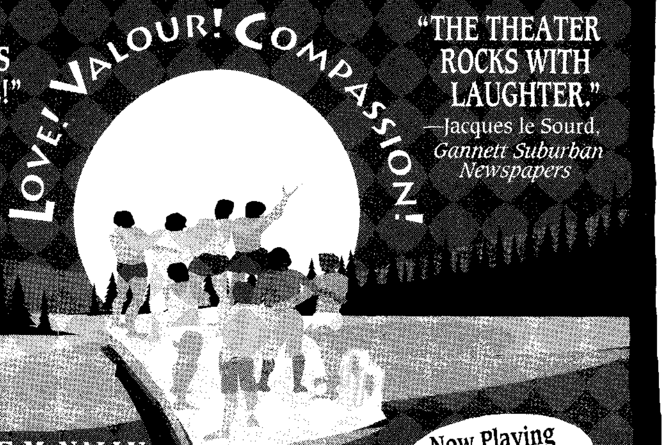
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THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Born to Be Wild—The story of a fourteen-year-old boy (Wil Horneff) who befriends a three-year-old captive gorilla. With Helen Shaver and Peter Boyle. Directed by John Gray, who co-wrote the screenplay with John Bunzel and Paul Young. Opening March 31. (Village East Cinemas, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 23rd St. West Triplex, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Gorilla Bathes at Noon—Writer-director Dusan Makavejev's 1993 comedy about a Russian army officer (Svetozar Cvetokiv) in post-Cold War Berlin features Anita Mancic, Alexandra Rohmig, and film clips from Mikhail Chiaureli's 1949 Russian epic, "The Fall of Berlin." In German and Russian. Opening March 29. (Little Theatre.)

Jefferson in Paris—Nick Nolte stars as the widowed statesman during his ambassadorship to France in the seventeen-eighties. With Greta Scacchi. Directed by James Ivory, produced by Ismail Merchant, and written by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. Opening March 31. (Paris.)

Tank Girl—Lori Petty is the eponymous mohawk-topped heroine, in an action film set in a postapocalyptic twenty-first century. With Malcolm McDowell, Naomi Watts, and Ice-T. Directed by Rachel Talalay. Written by Tedi Sarafian, from the British comic-book series by Jamie Hewlett and Alan Martin. Opening March 31. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Tommy Boy—The slow but earnest heir to a small-town Ohio auto-parts business (Chris Farley) wrestles with his new stepmother (Bo Derek) and her son (Rob Lowe) for control of the family business, in a comedy directed by Peter Segal and written by Bonnie Turner, Terry Turner, and Fred Wolf. Also with David Spade, Julie Warner, and Brian Dennehy. Opening March 31. (19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Waverly, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Whitney Balliett, Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre addresses and phone numbers are listed on page 30.)

Ballet—A documentary by Frederick Wiseman. (See note under Dance, on page 18.) (Film Forum; through April 4.)

Before the Rain—The first and third parts are set in Macedonia, where a young monk (Gregoire Colin) harbors a refugee (Labina Mitevska) from the local Albanian minority. His uncle, the chunky and fearless Aleksandar (Rade Serbedzija), has come home to get some peace. Not a chance: this is a place where villages are torn in two. The middle section, a scrap of love affair set in London, is less successful, although even here the editing is so beautifully paced that you sense fault lines running all over the world. Milcho Manchevski, the director, sees through hope and bigotry alike, and even when his complex rotary narrative makes no logical sense, it never stops making emotional sense. In Macedonian.—A.L. (3/13/95) (Village Theatre VII and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Brady Bunch Movie—There's a cardboard plot involving Michael McKean as an evil real-estate developer, but really this is a relaxed, hit-or-miss eighty-nine-minute skit. Gary Cole stands out as A Man Named Brady, a sweet optimist forever dispensing officious advice and nonsensical proverbs, but the three daughters—Christine Taylor as perfect, bitchy Marcia (updated with a lesbian admirer), Olivia Hack as lisping Cindy, and Jennifer Elise Cox as tortured Jan, the poster girl of adolescent neurosis—steal the show. Shelley Long, the most inevitable casting choice of the year, has surprisingly little to do as Carol. Directed by Betty Thomas.—S.K. (19th Street East 6, First & 62nd Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

Bye Bye, Love—Matthew Modine, Paul Reiser, and Randy Quaid, in a comedy about three single fathers who have weekend custody of their children. Directed by Sam Weisman. (Murray Hill Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Criterion Center.)

Candyman: Farewell to the Flesh—Tony Todd reprises his role as the hook-limbed spectre of New Orleans, who materializes to terrorize those who utter his name five times in a row. With Kelly Rowan, Timothy Carhart, Veronica Cartwright, and William O'Leary. Directed by Bill Condon. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Astor Plaza; through March 30.)

Circle of Friends—Although there isn't anything startlingly original in this tale of three Catholic girls falling in love in late-fifties Ireland, it gets a sweet telling in Pat O'Connor's pretty film. The first half, in particular, is amiable and well acted, especially by Minnie Driver, as the big, soft girl who lands the cute boy (Chris O'Donnell), and by Alan Cumming, who gives a funny, slithering performance as the opportunist who competes for her affections. The second half piles on the drama and gets mired in low-key intrigues. Still, there's a nice lilt to the proceedings. Adapted by Andrew Davies from Maeve Binchy's 1990 novel.—B.D. (19th Street East 6, Baronet, Waverly, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Dolores Claiborne—Kathy Bates stars as a housekeeper in Maine accused of murdering her wealthy old boss. Directed by Taylor Hackford. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Village Theatre VII, 34th St. East, Coronet, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

Exotica—A mysterious search through tall grass; a strip joint where the girls weave, untouchable, in front of the customers; a pet store drowning in hot green light: yes, it's the world according to Atom Egoyan. The plot is so closely woven that it verges on the incestuous. Having lost a daughter, Francis (Bruce Greenwood) finds a substitute in Christina (Mia Kirshner), a young dancer who dresses like a schoolgirl; after he runs into trouble with her, he enlists the help of a gay egg smuggler (don't ask) played by Don McKellar. The actors have to flatten their performances to match the weirdness—the occasional trill of guilt and rage feels about as spontaneous as an alarm clock. The movie is lush, enraptured, and almost no fun at all. It dances in front of us with the erotic blankness of Christina at Francis's table.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center, Murray Hill Cinemas, 68th Street Playhouse, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Farinelli—This saga of a famous eighteenth-century castrato and his dependent brother, a minor composer, is meant to have a tawdry kick, but the story wanders into a dark corner only intermittently—mostly when it's time for sex. Farinelli has the skill to get a woman going, but he needs his brother to finish the job. There's no tension to these scenes: the women seem fine with Farinelli alone, and besides, everyone appears to enjoy the ménages à trois. The bulk of the film is really concerned with the fact that this genius has to sing his brother's crummy operas. Since the two of them dress so flamboyantly, live like aristocrats, and behave like spoiled children, it's hard to take their problems seriously. The director, Gérard Corbiau, delivers a sumptuously photographed film, and Stefano Dionisi's androgynous looks are just right for the title character, but his voice (borrowed and electronically enhanced) sounds too disembodied, and his lip-synching doesn't help. In French.—B.D. (Lincoln Square.)

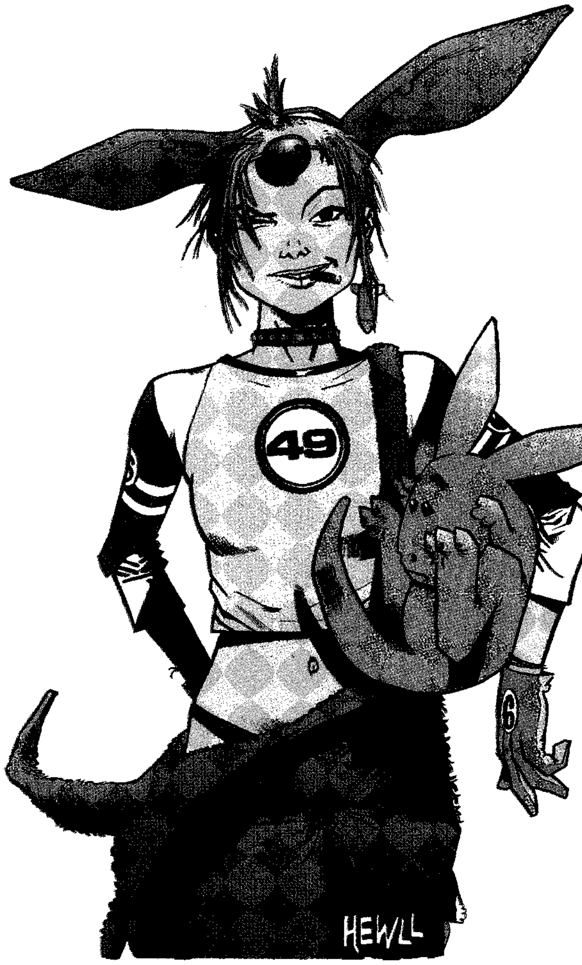
Funny Bones—A comedy in which a struggling comic, who is the son of a famous comic, returns to his childhood home in England to revive his career. Oliver Platt is the son, and Jerry Lewis is his successful father. Directed by Peter Chelsom. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Cinema II, and Lincoln Square.)

A Great Day in Harlem—A funny, moving, altogether miraculous documentary about how fifty-eight famous, near-famous, and not yet famous jazz musicians came to be photographed by Art Kane for *Esquire* in front of a brownstone on East 126th Street one morning in August of 1958. The movie, just under an hour long, is a mercurial mix of brief interviews with Kane (who died in February) and with musicians and bystanders who were at the shoot (only a dozen or so survive); alternate exposures (Kane took a hundred and twenty); various stills; an 8-mm. movie taken by Milt Hinton's wife, Mona; and sequences from the brilliant "Sound of Jazz" television special, which had aired just six months earlier and included many of the same musicians. On the same bill is Gjon Mili's classic—and pardonably arty—1944 jazz short, "Jammin' the Blues."—W.B. (Reviewed in the Jazz column, 1/23/95.) (Quad Cinema.)

I Am Cuba—Mikhail Kalatozov's 1964 propaganda epic, just now getting its American theatrical première, is an amazing artifact. The director and his cinematographer, Sergei Urusevsky, bombard the audience with one deliriously inventive shot after another: black-and-white compositions that are dense, angular marvels of visual architecture; long tracking shots that seem to defy gravity (and reason). The screenplay, by Yevgeny Yevtushenko and Enrique Pineda Barnet, consists of four folk tales from the bad old days of the Batista regime, linked by picturesque montages and ripe prose poetry read in voice-over. Essentially, it's a paean to Fidel Castro, and everything in it is meant to distract us from the grim reality of revolutionary Cuba. Despite the solemnity, the movie feels as silly as a Vegas illusionist's act; you gape and giggle as Kalatozov makes history disappear. In Spanish, Russian, and English.—T.R. (3/20/95) (Film Forum 3.)

Just Cause—Sean Connery is an icy Harvard law professor and capital-punishment opponent drafted to spring Blair Underwood from death row, and Laurence Fishburne is the corrupt small-town policeman in his way. Two or three times, the actors trick you into thinking that this thriller means to grapple with white liberal guilt, but the director, Arne Glimcher, quickly chucks the dilemma they've set up. The replacement: a ridiculous racist revenge plot climaxing in an alligator-ridden swamp in the Everglades. Among the many garish stereotypes here is Ed Harris, in a cheeseball performance as a white-trash Hannibal Lecter.—S.K. (Village East Cinemas, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 23rd St. West Triplex, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

Losing Isaiah—Jessica Lange plays a social worker struggling to keep possession of the boy she has adopted, and Halle Berry is the child's natural mother, who wants him back, in a drama directed by Stephen Gyllenhaal. With David Strathairn, Samuel L. Jackson, and Cuba Gooding, Jr. Written by Naomi Foner. (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Tower East East 85th Street, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Embassy 1.)



Opening March 31, Lori Petty in "Tank Girl." The drawing is by Jamie Hewlett, co-creator of the comic-book series.

The Madness of King George—Alan Bennett's stage play has moved to the screen, with the same star (Nigel Hawthorne), the same director (Nicholas Hytner), and the same story, about the King of England's decline, in the years 1788-89, from cheerful disciplinarian to lewd, unsleeping ranter. It's a fine dramatic predicament—and that's how it stays, never really pressing forward or pulling us into a plot. But there is plenty of relish here—in Ian Holm's fierce turn as a country physician, and in Hawthorne's blend of thundering and whimpers. With Helen Mirren (underused) and Rupert Everett (overweight).—A.L. (1/16/94) (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Major Payne—Damon Wayans plays an officer in charge of a group of rowdy military-school cadets, in a comedy directed by Nick Castle. Written by Wayans, Dean Lorey, and Gary Rosen, from the 1955 movie "The Private War of Major Benson," in which Charlton Heston played the officer. (First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Regency, and National Twin.)

Martha and I—In a small Czech town during the nineteen-thirties, a Jewish obstetrician (Michel Piccoli) marries his German housekeeper (Marianne Sägebrecht), in a love story by the Czech writer-director Jiří Weiss. In German. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Quad Cinema.)

Mina Tannenbaum—Writer-director Martine Dugowson's feature follows a quarter-century-long friendship between two Jewish women (Romane Bohringer and Elsa Zylberstein) in Paris. With Florence Thomassin. In French. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Muriel's Wedding—The Australian director P. J. Hogan's début was a big hit in his native country. Toni Collette plays Muriel, the shyest member of a bored and bulbous family living in Porpoise Spit. Her only resource is old Abba tapes, her only dream to marry; the identity of the bridegroom is immaterial. Muriel's quest for contentment includes vacationing in the sun, sharing an apartment with her best friend (Rachel Griffiths), and trying on wedding dresses under false pretenses. The result is being sold as a feel-good picture in the same groove as "Strictly Ballroom," but there's a major difference: Hogan's movie doesn't feel good for long. The loud and lurid comedy, verging on caricature, soon grows bleak with bad news—divorce, cancer, suicide—none of which deepens the film; it just turns it into a downer. But the two fine, edgy performances by Collette and Griffiths keep things afloat. When they squeeze into shining satin and actually impersonate Abba, you experience both the sadness of delusion and the bliss of high camp.—A.L. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Beekman, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Outbreak—Wolfgang Petersen's biohazard thriller is a textbook example of Hollywood's ability to make something new look very old and very familiar. The screenplay, by Laurence Dworet and Robert Roy Pool (and five pricey script doctors), invents a rain-forest virus called Motaba, which migrates from Zaire and runs amok in a Northern California town. The virus is a promising villain for an apocalyptic thriller, but the filmmakers keep it contained—locked into an action-movie structure that reduces an unsettling subject to a predictable this-time-it's-personal conflict between a good-guy scientist (Dustin Hoffman) and a bad-guy general (Donald Sutherland). The movie produces a bizarre hybrid strain of suspense: it's a Hot Zone thriller with a Cold War sensibility. Also with Rene Russo, Morgan Freeman, Kevin Spacey, and Cuba Goodings, Jr.—T.R. (3/20/95) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

Priest—Young Father Greg (Linus Roache) arrives in Liverpool ready to spread the word, but there are serious obstacles to his zeal: a laid-back, liberal colleague (Tom Wilkinson); a Catholic population that doesn't want to hear about original sin; and his own furtive homosexuality. Just when it seems that his troubles can't get worse, a young girl who is being abused by her father comes to him, and, forbidden to break the confidence of the confessional, he feels powerless to help her. The movie, written by

CURRENT FILMS—Cont'd

Jimmy McGovern and directed by Antonia Bird, is almost comically determined to pile on the big issues and ethical wranglings that face the modern clergy; angry and unfair, it wants to expose the hypocrisy of the Church without bothering to show how the institution really works. But it's warmed into life by the smart little jokes that McGovern keeps sneaking in, and by strong playing from the leads: Wilkinson makes a shaggy, charitable Hardy to Roache's high-minded Laurel. Bird's direction, like the musical score, tends toward hysteria, but the emotional punch of the ending is enough to lay you flat.—A.L. (3/27/95) (Angelika Film Center, Cinema I, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Pulp Fiction—In Quentin Tarantino's celebrated picture, John Travolta, Samuel L. Jackson, Uma Thurman, Tim Roth, Harvey Keitel, Christopher Walken, and Bruce Willis parade through two and a half hours of complicated, cross-weaving Los Angeles plots, some of which are more gripping than others; the talk is dirty and funny, the violence always waiting just around the corner. It's a bright and startling picture, but the next day, it seems like a dream: the film attacks your senses and gives you almost nothing to remember it by, let alone to nourish you.—A.L. (10/10/94) (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 57th Street Playhouse, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

Sankofa—A model (Oyafunmike Ogunlano) on a photo shoot in West Africa is hurled back in time to the era of slavery, in a film written and directed by Haile Gerima. (Thalia.)

The Secret of Roan Inish—John Sayles' fable about a mythological Celtic creature, the Selkie (half seal, half human), and its effect on an Irish family unfolds as a tall tale, and it offers the pleasures of a magical story told in mysterious tones. The movie begins as a rousing sea adventure, then turns into a home-and-hearth mood piece; what saves it from being cloying is an almost total lack of drama. The rhythms are placid and the camera work (by Haskell Wexler) is simple and unfussy. The film's a charm.—B.D. (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Cinema, and Lincoln Square.)

Shallow Grave—Kerry Fox, Ewan McGregor, and Christopher Eccleston are three Edinburgh roommates confronted by the corpse of their new lodger and the stash of drug money that he has left behind. They bury the body and keep the cash; greed and paranoia soon kick in; and the plot, smartly worked out by screenwriter John Hodge, marches toward its climax. Not that you care too much how it ends up or what happens to these people—the film is less a thriller than a frosty exercise in logic. But the director, Danny Boyle, does wonders with a small budget, and the suave, dense-hued look of his movie stays with you long after the horror has evaporated.—A.L. (2/13/95) (Village Theatre VII and Lincoln Square.)

The Shawshank Redemption—Tim Robbins returns to his best form with his haunted, cunning portrayal of Andy Dufresne, a young banker sentenced to life imprisonment in the nineteen-forties. Frank Darabont's movie never grabs at you, preferring to work patiently on your sympathies and nerves while finding time for casual jokes. What at first seems like a plotless tale of companionship—principally between Andy and a fixer named Red (Morgan Freeman)—tightens into excitement. The picture stays on track and leaves you, appropriately enough, with a surging sense of release.—A.L. (9/26/94) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Olympia.)

Strawberry and Chocolate—The Cuban director Tomás Gutiérrez Alea charts the efforts of Diego (Jorge Perugorria), a gay artist, to seduce David (Vladimir Cruz), a straight and, frankly, rather boring student. It's a daring movie to have come out of Cuba, although Gutiérrez Alea's grasp of the radical temperament may seem unsophisticated to audiences here. Diego kicks out against government restrictions, David lives quietly within them; wouldn't it have been more intriguing the other way around? Co-directed by Juan Carlos Tabio. In Spanish.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Sum of Us—David Stevens has adapted his play, about an Australian widower (Jack Thompson) and his gay son (Russell Crowe), for the screen. Directed by Kevin Dowling and Geoff Burton. (Village Theatre VII and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

Tall Tale: The Unbelievable Adventures of Pecos Bill—A comic Western set at the turn of the century, in which a young boy (Nick Stahl) rescues the family farm with the help of some legendary friends—Pecos Bill, Paul Bunyan, and John Henry (Patrick Swayze, Oliver Platt, and Roger Aaron Brown, respectively). Directed by Jeremiah Chechik. (Village East Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East, 23rd St. West Triplex, Guild, and Olympia.)

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000).
Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171).
Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th (477-6600).
Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th (982-0400).
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th (924-3363).
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th (529-6799).
19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th (260-8000).
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th (689-6548).
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th (532-5544).
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th (683-0255).
Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th (755-3020).
Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th (759-1411).
Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th (759-2262).
Plaza, 42 E. 58th (355-3320).
Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th (935-6420).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th (759-4630).
Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th (355-1663).
Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th (753-6022).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd (513-5408).
Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th (832-1670).
Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th (737-2622).
New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th (744-7339).
68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th (734-0302).
Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st (879-1313).
East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th (249-5100).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th (534-1880).
Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th (876-2400).
86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th (249-1144).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110).
Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd (929-8037).
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th (929-3350).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th (255-8800).
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd (513-5402).
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd (989-0060).
Guild, 33 W. 50th (757-2406).
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th (765-7600).
57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th (581-7360).
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th (265-2520).
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th (586-1900).
Paris, 4 W. 58th (980-5656).
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th (752-5959).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd (265-7466).
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd (757-2280).
Regency, B'way at 67th (724-3700).
Lincoln Square, B'way at 68th (336-5000).
84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th (877-3600).
Thalia, B'way at 95th (316-4962).
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th (222-1200).
Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th (865-8128).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th (354-0900).
Embassy 1, B'way at 46th (302-0494).
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th (730-7262).
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way (869-8340).
National Twin, B'way at 44th (869-0950).

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

The Ballad of Cable Hogue (1970)—Sam Peckinpah is in a relaxed and playful mood in this rambling comedy-Western with Jason Robards (in fine form) as a desert rat who discovers a mudhole and turns water merchant, Stella Stevens as an ambitious whore, and David Warner as a lecherous self-ordained preacher. The picture needs more invention, more variety; it's a little too pleased with itself, and shots are held too long.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; March 29-30.)

49th Parallel (1941)—Bracing anti-Nazi propaganda. A stranded U-boat team treks across Canada—a prototypical high concept that enables the producer-director, Michael Powell, and the screenwriter, Emeric Pressburger, to dramatize Allied virtues simply and concretely, through run-ins the Germans have with diverse North Americans. The spokesmen for democracy include a French-Canadian trapper (Laurence Olivier), the leader of a Hutterite farm (Anton Walbrook), an aesthete-intellectual (Leslie Howard), and a griping enlisted man (Raymond Massey). Eric Portman and Niall MacGinniss stand out among the Germans. The cinematographer, Frederick Young, brings elating vastness to the imagery: the Canadian Rockies might have stolen the show were it not for David Lean's taut editing and the mood-setting gravity of Ralph Vaughan Williams' score.—M.S. (Film Forum 2; March 29.)

One of Our Aircraft Is Missing (1942)—Pulling a switch on their previous propaganda hit, "49th Parallel" (see above), the writing-producing-directing team of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger dramatize the plight of a British bomber crew forced to bail out over occupied Holland. Its only engaging members are Godfrey Tearle, who has a heavyweight grace, and Bernard Miles, who is so eccentrically expressive that even his face seems to drawl. The true swashbucklers are Pamela Brown and Googie Withers, women in the Dutch Resistance. This mix makes for an uneven movie with a few thrilling coups de cinéma, like the opening crash. Peter Ustinov, Joyce Redman, and others show up in minor but telling roles. So does Powell, as the air-base dispatcher. His ace collaborators included David Lean (editor), Ronald Neame (cinematographer), and Guy Green and Robert Krasker (camera operators); all but Krasker later became directors.—M.S. (Film Forum 2; April 3-4.)

The Osterman Weekend (1983)—A C.I.A. man (John Hurt) plays psychological games with a group of upper-middle-class friends having a reunion at the house of a TV newsman (Rutger Hauer). In this erratically exciting shambles, Sam Peckinpah ignores the plot, then throws it away—he's more interested in decrying the fake imagery of the television age and dramatizing how cold the Big Chill can really get. Hauer's pals feel edgy in his company: he's made his fortune as a TV crusader; they've made theirs laundering dirty money. Peckinpah and the cinematographer, John Coquillon, brew a creepy visual aura—the night falls in spooky blue-green shades, and red functions as a danger signal, whether it marks a hidden video cam or the infrared guide light for a rifle. The cast includes Dennis Hopper, Helen Shaver, and Craig T. Nelson, sensational as a sarcastic TV writer; Burt Lancaster is disappointing as Hurt's boss. Screenplay by Alan Sharp, from Robert Ludlum's novel.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; March 29-30.)

A Room with a View (1986)—Adapted from the early novel by E. M. Forster, this is a whimsical social comedy about a muddled young English girl (Helena Bonham Carter) who desires yet fears sexual love; she runs away from the man (Julian Sands) who stirs her emotions, and becomes engaged to a rich twit (Daniel Day-Lewis). The actors who circulate around the heroine create a whirring atmosphere—a comic hum. They include Denholm Elliott (playing the novel's resident saint), Maggie Smith, Judi Dench, Simon Callow, and Rosemary Leach. Full of allusions to art and literature, the movie is more than a little precious, but it's a piece of charming foolishness. It was produced by Ismail Merchant and directed by James Ivory, from a script by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; April 3.)

THE WILD BUNCH (1969)—Sam Peckinpah's Western epic—perhaps the greatest American movie—is a brilliant, suspenseful action picture about a band of outlaws on the run in south Texas and Mexico in the days before the First World War. It has been restored to its full two-hour-and-twenty-five-minute length, and the restored scenes—mostly flashbacks to painful moments in the life of the gang's leader (William Holden)—deepen and complicate the viewer's responses to the film's violent set pieces. The voluptuous carnage in the opening shoot-out and in the climactic massacre is more disturbing than ever, because it's now tinged with the melancholy of an aging killer.—T.R. (3/6/95) (Lincoln Square.... ¶ Walter Reade Theatre; March 31.)

WR—MYSTERIES OF THE ORGANISM (1971)—Controversial, comic collage-movie by Dusan Makavejev that mixes and parodies left-wing politics and Wilhelm Reichian psychology; the point of view is so unstable that it seems to be more sophomoric than anything else. With the gifted actress Milena Dravić, as well as Jackie Curtis and Tuli Kupferberg. A Yugoslavian film, filmed in Europe and the United States. English subtitles and dialogue.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; April 2.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves. (246-1583)—"Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle" (Alan Rudolph).... "Interview with the Vampire" (Neil Jordan).... "Star Trek Generations" (David Carson).... "Billy Madison" (Tamra Davis).... "Disclosure" (Barry Levinson).... "Nell" (Michael Apted).

FILM FORUM 2 AND 3, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)—**THEATRE 2:** A program of films by the team of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger. March 29: "49th Parallel" (†) and "The Volunteer" (1943).... March 30-April 2: "The Red Shoes" (1948).... April 3-4: "The Small Back Room" (1949) and "One of Our Aircraft Is Missing" (†).... **THEATRE 3:** "Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!" (1965, Russ Meyer), "Mamma Roma" (1962, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian), and "I Am Cuba" (†).

CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363)—Through March 30: "Naked Killer" (Clarence Fok).... ¶ From March 31: A weeklong showing of over a hundred films made by students at N.Y.U.'s Tisch School of the Arts. (For information, call 998-1795.)

NEW DIRECTORS/NEW FILMS—A festival of international films. March 29 at 6 and March 30 at 9:30: "Borderline" (Panos Karkanevatos, Greece).... ¶ March 29 at 8:30 and March 30 at 6: "A Borrowed Life" (Wu Nien-jen, Taiwan).... ¶ March 31 at 6 and April 2 at 9: "Leona's Sister Gerri" (Jane Gillooly, United States) and "The Female Offender" (Mary Ann Toman, United States).... ¶ March 31 at 9 and April 1 at 1: "Nobody Loves Me" (Marion Vernoux, France).... ¶ April 1 at 3:30 and April 2 at 6:30: "The Day the Sun Turned Cold" (Yim Ho, Hong Kong).... ¶ April 1 at 6 and April 2 at 3:30: "The Sexual Life of the Belgians" (Jan Bucquoy, Belgium).... ¶ April 1 at 9 and April 2 at 1: "Zinat" (Ebrahim Mokhtari, Iran). (Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. For information, call 875-5610.)

EINAT PELED

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—April 3 at 2:30: "A Room with a View" (†).... ¶ April 3 at 6: "Natural Born Killers" (1994, Oliver Stone).... ¶ April 3 at 6:30: A program of films by Gunvor Nelson.... ¶ April 4 at 2:30: "Private Life" (1961, Louis Malle; in French).... ¶ April 4 at 6: "The Bed You Sleep In" (1993, Jon Jost).

Opening March 31, Wil Horneff in "Born to Be Wild."

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—A retrospective of the television and film works of Sam Peckinpah. March 29 at 2: "Convoy" (1978).... March 29 at 6:30 and March 30 at 4:15: "The Osterman Weekend" (†).... March 29 at 4:15 and 8:30 and March 30 at 2: "The Ballad of Cable Hogue" (†).... March 31 at 2 and April 1-2 at 1:30: All thirteen episodes (four and a half hours) of the television series "The Westerner," directed by Peckinpah and starring Brian Keith, will be shown.... March 31 at 8: "The Wild Bunch" (†).... ¶ From April 1: A weeklong festival of work by filmmakers of the Sephardic (Spanish) Jewish community, which is spread throughout Europe, the Middle East, the Americas, and elsewhere.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—A program of films by Dusan Makavejev. April 1 at 2: "Love Affair, or the Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator" (1967).... April 1 at 4: "A Hole in the Soul" (1994).... April 1 at 5:15: "Manifesto" (1988).... April 2 at 2: "Man Is Not a Bird" (1965).... April 2 at 4: "WR—Mysteries of the Organism" (†). Mr. Makavejev will be present both days.

DONNELL LIBRARY CENTER, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—March 30 at 2:30: "Gimme Shelter" (1970, David Maysles, Albert Maysles, and Charlotte Zwerin), about the Rolling Stones.... ¶ April 4 at noon: "The Black Pirate" (1926, Albert Parker), with Douglas Fairbanks, Sr.

A DIFFERENT LIGHT BOOKSTORE, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Saturday-and-Sunday-night series of free films. On April 1 at 7, the feature will be Lillian Hellman's "The Children's Hour" (1961, William Wyler). On April 2 at 7, the feature will be "Sunset Boulevard" (1950, Billy Wilder), with Gloria Swanson.

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—April 4 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Confidentially Yours" (1983, François Truffaut; in French), with Jean-Louis Trintignant.

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, 200 Eastern Parkway (1-718 638-5000)—A program of recent Italian films. March 31 at 7: "Towards the South" (1992, Marco Pozzessere).... ¶ April 1-2 at 2: "The Robber of Children" (1991, Gianni Amelio).... ¶ April 1 at 7: "Libera" (1993, Pappi Corsicato).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—April 2 at 6: "Aerograd" (1935, Alexander Dovzhenko).... ¶ April 2 at 8: "The Passion of Joan of Arc" (1928, Carl Dreyer).

WHITNEY MUSEUM, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—The 1995 Biennial Exhibition, presenting films and videos from the past two years. Call for schedule and screening times.

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

A SURVIVOR OF B-MOVIE HELL

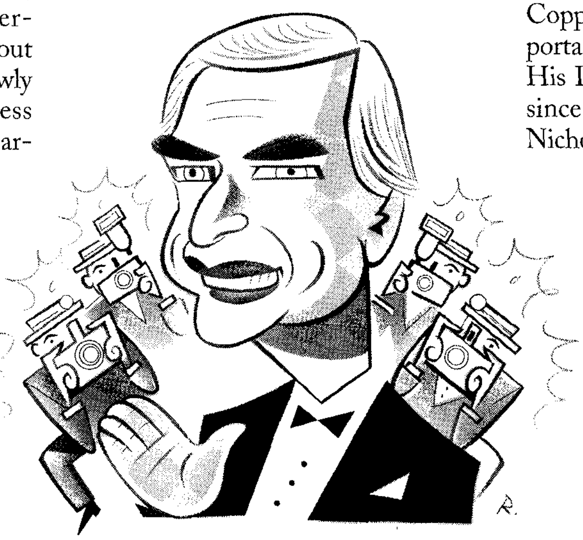
EVEN if Martin Landau doesn't win the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor this year—he has been the odds-on favorite for his performance as Bela Lugosi in Tim Burton's "Ed Wood"—he'll have plenty of consolation prizes. The sixty-five-year-old actor has won virtually every supporting-actor award leading up to the Oscars, including a Golden Globe and awards from the New York Film Critics Circle, the Los Angeles Film Critics, and the National Society of Film Critics. His last warmup victory before the Oscars occurred a few weeks ago, at the first annual Screen Actors Guild Awards, which took place on a cavernous stage set at Universal Studios, in Los Angeles.

Forty-five minutes before the show, Landau emerged from a long white limousine, stepping out onto the red carpet that led into the building. A set of bleachers had been stocked with screaming fans, and they dutifully screamed when Landau waved. Gretchen Becker, his tall, blond actress-screenwriter-veterinarian girlfriend, followed him out of the limo, and the couple began slowly making their way through the press gantlet. A few big stars had already arrived: Jamie Lee Curtis and John Travolta were stopping for interviews at every video camera along the way, but Jerry Seinfeld walked briskly past the clamoring photographers and reporters without a word. Most of the cast members of "E.R.," "NYPD Blue," "Picket Fences," and "Northern Exposure" were drifting by. But no one appeared to be enjoying the pandemonium as much as Landau: he had made it all the way back from B-movie hell, and if CNN and E! and Star TV wanted to talk, he was available.

THIRTY-SIX years earlier, Alfred Hitchcock had given Landau his first movie role, in "North by Northwest," but the Brooklyn-born actor's film career never really took off. Like many of the younger actors at the Screen Actors Guild Awards, he had once been riding high in a hit TV series ("Mission: Impossible"), but a failed sci-fi series ("Space: 1999") followed, and then came a decade and a half of bad parts in cheap action movies, disaster movies, blaxploitation movies, horror movies, and cheesy TV movies. Landau appeared in the small-screen epic "The Harlem Globetrotters on Gilligan's Island," in "Kung Fu: The Movie," and in films like "Sweet Revenge," a white-slavery adventure, and "W.A.R. (Women Against Rape)," a Frank Stallone vehicle. He played more one-dimensional villains than he cares to remember.

The day before the awards ceremony, Landau had lunch at Le Dôme, on Sunset Boulevard, and recalled the years of frustration. "I was always an actor," he said, shaking his head. "But what I was acting in—boy oh boy oh boy." It would have been one thing if he had been a lousy actor, but in fact in the fifties Landau received a great education at the Actors' Studio and on the New York stage—he hung around with James Dean and once dated Marilyn Monroe—and later became one of the most respected acting teachers in Hollywood. (Jack Nicholson was one of his students.) But somewhere along the line the top agents and casting directors forgot what he could do. "There was a lot of pain, a lot of angst," Landau said. "I felt like the pinch-hitter who had all the equipment, a great bat, and the manager just kept skipping me. Or I was getting up to bat, and no one was pitching to me. And I just said to myself, 'One day, I'm going to get up to bat and I'm gonna hit a home run.' It's as simple as that."

Landau got his chance to bat in 1987, when the producer Fred Roos, who was working with Francis Ford Coppola, suggested Landau for an important role in "Tucker: The Man and His Dream." Roos had known Landau since the sixties, and he remembered Nicholson's telling him that Landau was the best acting teacher of them all. Coppola gave Landau the part—he played a disillusioned financier—and he hit his home run. It was a nuanced, complicated role, and Landau's performance earned him his first Oscar nomination. Then he landed the lead in Woody Allen's "Crimes and Misdemeanors," and hit that one out of the park, too. Another Oscar nomination



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT RISKO

followed. Then, in 1993, Tim Burton asked him to be in "Ed Wood."

By acclamation, Landau's acting reached a new pitch of intensity in his portrayal of Lugosi. Impersonating a seventy-year-old alcoholic, morphine-addicted horror-movie icon—the destitute shadow of the Hungarian star who had played the classic screen vampire in the 1931 "Dracula"—Landau went soaring beyond caricature. Even though practically no one saw "Ed Wood," his performance astonished everyone who did.

And so Landau found himself making his way up the red carpet and into the Screen Actors Guild Awards, where, of course, he won another statuette. "Ten years ago, there were casting directors who wouldn't see me, agents who wouldn't represent me," Landau said in his acceptance speech. "I know how tough it is out there to get a job, and then, when you get a job, to do the job well. It's a tough, tough life—peaks and valleys, life and career. This is a peak."

PAYING HOMAGE TO PRESIDENT DOLE

It was a normal day in the life of the American Red Cross in Greater New York. First, part of a building on West 140th Street, in Harlem, fell down. Beds tumbled through the air, people slid out of their apartments and onto the ground, three people died, and the Red Cross was there, helping shocked residents find temporary shelter, and food and clothing. Then it was back downtown for that evening's big fund-raiser, the Eleventh Annual Red Cross Award Dinner Dance, at the Pierre. "That's why I have bad hair tonight," said Christopher Peake, a Red Cross spokesman who had spent much of the day at the Harlem scene, in the drizzling rain. He was now in a tuxedo, and actually his hair didn't look so bad, framed by a centerpiece of tulips and jonquils, and perhaps improved by subdued lighting from eight crystal chandeliers. "The most amazing thing up in Harlem was the body dog searching in the debris," he said.

Definitely not having a bad-hair night was Elizabeth Dole, the wife of Senator Robert Dole and the president of the American Red Cross. President Dole (it doesn't sound quite as bad as one might have imagined) has chestnut-colored Republican hair, which was softly coiffed, and she was wearing a fitted burgundy velvet evening suit ("Someone made it for me! I love velvet!" she exclaimed, in her enthusiastic, North Carolina hostess voice) and sparkling drop earrings. Of course, she hadn't been standing in the rain in Harlem; she had just flown up on the three-o'clock shuttle from Washington. Dole is extremely pretty, with round green eyes and a full mouth and a direct personality. She tilts her head attentively when she listens. She was the recipient of the evening's award; previous award winners have included Alice Tully, Princess Yasmin Aga Khan, Adele and Louis Auchincloss, Kathryn and Walter Wriston, Elizabeth and Felix Rohatyn, and, most recently, Brooke Astor. Not exactly a sequence at the end of which you would expect to find Elizabeth Dole, but award givers are famous for having political instincts as well as philanthropic ones.

Surrounded by the deep-blue swags and golden draperies of the ballroom were more than thirty-five dinner tables set with groupings of candles and floral centerpieces and Royal Doulton china. American Express was there. So were Bristol-Myers Squibb; Coopers & Lybrand; the New York Times Company; Union Bank of Switzerland; Chemical Bank; New York Life; Le Boeuf, Lamb; Ogilvy & Mather; and Price Waterhouse. The actress Arlene Dahl, with her *rawther* red hair and her bearded husband, presided over one table. Otherwise, it was a typical, faceless, captains-of-industry fund-raiser (no models! no rock stars!), of which there seems to be at least one every night in New York City. It was not a society night, but still the evening raised four hundred and thirty thousand dollars. (Overheard amid the cocktail chatter: "The question is, How much does he have to sell his soul doing it?" "She was devoted to her husband, which we all are. I guess she had the reputation for being a bitch, but what do I know? I liked her." "What are *you* doing here?" "Go on out and work the crowd. I expect five business deals here tonight." "He had pictures on the wall of all his well-known clients, and pictures with the Cardinal." "Barney's? It started as a men's store." "*She* should be the candidate.")

Elizabeth Dole is good box-office now; she is the Republicans' Hillary Clinton. Like Hillary, she's not a yes-woman for her husband; she is a lawyer and has an impressive C.V. of her own. She is fifty-eight, and has been Secretary of Transportation and Secretary of Labor. Still, like a good political wife, she always manages to take time off to help with her husband's campaigns. When Senator Dole announces his latest Presidential bid, in Topeka, on April 10th, his wife will be at his side. Then it will be back to business as usual, with short leaves here and there for important campaign stops. "Over the years, I've chosen to help my husband do what we feel is best for us," she says. "Being on the road has been a learning, growing experience."

Dole is famous for her intelligence, her perseverance, and her willingness to work as hard as anyone else. As the president of the Red Cross, she controls millions of dollars and a huge staff, mostly volunteers. Under her presidency, which began in 1991, the Red Cross has committed a hundred and forty-eight million dollars to developing a state-of-the-art blood system for the United States, since, as Dole points out, the Red Cross provides half of America's blood supply.

When she explains operations, she sometimes sounds like Norman Schwarzkopf in front of his famous diagrams. "Actually, I do have three generals working for me," she says, laughing. "A retired four-star general on the blood program, and two retired three-star generals in national operations and in disaster services." Like a good general, she has visited all the Red Cross's recent and current battlefields: Kuwait, Rwanda, Zaire, Bosnia, Florida during Hurricane Andrew, California after the earthquake, Hawaii after Hurricane Iniki, and the Midwest during the floods. "Rwanda was the hardest experience of my life, walking through all those bodies, all those lost children," she says. "That's why we have fund-raisers like tonight's. If you are going to be there around the world, this provides the ability to reach out and help."

President Dole seems so deeply involved in her work that it's hard to imagine her in the more traditionally passive role of a Republican First Lady. "Oh, I haven't even thought about that," she says. "My husband hasn't even announced yet. But I do think it's a platform from which you can make an enormous difference. There are many things that you could consider."

INTOLERANCE

Anxiety, stress, dread: faced with getting out of bed in the morning, some people, even the congenitally driven, sometimes just break down a little bit and get an ailment. Then they go out and talk about it. Not long ago, all you heard about was overtly stress-related ailments—temporomandibular-joint syndrome, and attention-deficit disorder, with the ultra-stylish Epstein-Barr filling the occasional lull. But lately, at small dinner parties and anywhere else food is present, people have been bewailing "lactose intolerance," a physiological condition whereby the digestive system has an unattractive reaction to milk and to anything with milk in it. From the decibel level in Manhattan, you might think its incidence is greatest among the twenty-somethings.

Wife of a Young Lactose-Intolerant Lawyer: We were having this sort of dairy summer, out on Fire Island. His stomach was so bad. I sat up in bed in the middle of the night, and I had this revelation: Oh my God, it's lactose intolerance. I didn't dare wake him up—I thought, I'll tell him in the morning. The next day I forgot my diagnosis—you know how you forget your dreams?—but sometime in the next forty-eight hours I said, "Oh, I forgot to tell you, you have lactose intolerance."

According to McNeil Consumer Products, distributors of Lactaid Caplets—little bone-colored pills that contain the enzyme needed to break down milk sugar—and the National Institutes of Health, between thirty and fifty million Americans are officially lactose intolerant. In Manhattan, the under-thirty crowd all seem to speak like this:

Young Woman in Publishing: I'd feel deathly ill and find out there was

NOVEL IDEAS

Expert testimony: What are literature's great unmade movies?

Edna O'Brien

Gabriel García Márquez's "Love in the Time of Cholera" is a wonderful and meandering excursion into love in its many guises. Blessedly, it concedes that age is no barrier to romantic love. As a bonus, it is set in an exotic landscape complete with flowers, foliage, tropical birds, swamps, storms, steamboats, and prostitutes. I think Al Pacino would be wonderful as Florentino Ariza. He has both the guile and the innocence of that very engaging character, who, while he waits and pines for his goddess, does not deprive himself of earthly pleasures.

•

Gore Vidal

My novel "Myra Breckinridge." It's true that a movie by that name was released by Fox in 1970. Unfortunately, one Darryl Zanuck, an ancient auteur—French for "lecher"—wanted an "actress" called Genevieve Gilles as star. She agreed, on condition that her boyfriend, Michael Sarne, be allowed to write and direct any picture Fox owned—and he chose "Myra Breckinridge." When Fox gave me the news, I said, "But he's never been in the United States! He's made only one—bad—movie!" I was told, "This is the sixties. He wears beads and long hair, he's *with it*." So I resigned as writer-producer. Had Mike Nichols made the film, we might have had Anne Bancroft instead of Raquel Welch in the part. Now, of course, it would be Bruce Willis.

•

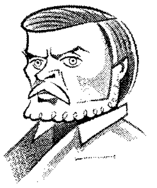
Jane Smiley

"To the Lighthouse," a book I can't read without weeping. There's a bias against Virginia Woolf, because she's thought to be "artsy." But I have a theory that movies are about male suffering and female pluck. On the basis of Mr. Ramsay's suffering and the pluck of his wife and daughter, "Lighthouse" qualifies. And "Lighthouse" is a terribly sad book, and sad books often make for great movies. Jeremy Irons was born to play Mr. Ramsay, who's based on Leslie Stephen, Woolf's father. It's a cliché, but as Mrs. Ramsay I see a big-jawed mother, someone like Glenn Close with a golden chignon.

John Updike

"La Princesse de Clèves," by Mme. de Lafayette. I read the Nancy Mitford translation some thirty years ago, and it lingers in my mind as a succession of moonlit scenes. The plot is slight enough for a movie to digest, and it's romantic—there's a bit of "Cyrano de Bergerac," a bit of "Les Liaisons Dangereuses." I'd cast Michelle Pfeiffer, who loved and suffered so beautifully in the film of "Liaisons," as the princess. And, although she and Daniel Day-Lewis didn't quite click for me in "The Age of Innocence," I'd give them another try, and cast him as M. de Nemours. And for M. de Clèves, a smaller but not unjuicy part, who better than Dustin Hoffman?

•



Norman Rush

Any of the sequels to "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," but especially "Ozma of Oz," which introduces Tiktok—a great character, metal like the Tin Woodman, but spherical and not neurotic—and Princess Langwidere, who has a wardrobe of different heads. Morphing technology is perfect for cinematizing Oz. Funnily, I'm not a great fan of the original movie—I don't like musicals—but it did deeply establish the feminist premise of all the Oz books, a plucky young girl straightening out one dysfunctional utopia after another.

•

E. L. Doctorow

This is a Movie Culture question. Why ask it of a novelist? Is a movie our highest accreditation? It makes me think of one of the most horrifying scenes in American literature—in F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Last Tycoon," when the studio head tells the writer how to write. And the writer listens. Fitzgerald's need for humiliation knew no bounds. Instead of asking writers this question, you ought to ask a different question of some leading directors: What film would they like to see validated with a major novel? And, two, who would the novelist be? I like movies, but I hate the culture of movies.

—Jesse Kornbluth

Parmesan cheese in the pasta. I miss lasagna. And milkshakes. Have you ever had a big, thick Friendly Fribble thing? (*Pause.*) At the same time, I think how sick I'd be on it. My roommate and her sister and my boyfriend's brother's fiancée have lactose intolerance, and it always comes up in conversation. But they don't have it as badly as I do. They say, "Oh, I'm lactose intolerant," and then they grab a pat of butter and put it on their bread. I can't do that.

Reporter: It seems to be especially prevalent among young people.

Young Woman in Publishing: Not true. My mother's best friend, she's like fifty or something. She lives in Florida. And my grandmother has it, too. She doesn't eat ice cream. And—let's see—there's some star, and he's old. In his forties.

Thanks in part to the diligent effort of the Lactaid people, the recognition of this syndrome isn't limited to the city:

Forty-two-year-old Postmaster in Upstate New York: I can eat chocolate-raspberry truffle—raspberry syrup and chunks of truffle candy in the ice cream—if I take a couple of lactose tablets with it. But I know someone who says she can take six or seven tablets and still be sick.

Reporter: Do you think it's a popular affliction nowadays?

Postmaster: Well, I see all the Lactaid commercials—I see them on cable—but we haven't yet had a Lactose-Intolerance Movie of the Week.

CHINATOWN'S NEW ENFORCER

It seems to be a tradition that the leading prosecutor of Asian organized crime in New York is invariably a woman, and that the woman is invariably nicknamed the Dragon Lady. Nancy Ryan, who ran the Jade Squad of the Manhattan District Attorney's Office from the late seventies to the late eighties and locked up a number of high-ranking members of the Ghost Shadows, a notorious Chinatown gang, was Dragon Lady No. 1. She was followed by Catherine Palmer, an Assistant United States Attorney in Brooklyn, who over the past decade won a succession of Asian heroin cases, and nearly got killed in the process. In early 1990, a gun and heroin merchant sent a booby-trapped briefcase that contained a loaded rifle to Palmer's office. Two visiting officers stopped her just as she was about to open it.

Last fall, only weeks before Palmer was scheduled to try a murder and racketeering case, she unexpectedly resigned to become a partner at a New York law firm. The defendant she left behind was Clifford Wong, the head of the Tung On tong, which, along with an affiliated street gang, sometimes called the Tung On Boys, was said to control a large section of southeastern Chinatown through intimidation and extortion. (Tongs are business associations that effectively govern Chinatown; they are ostensibly legitimate, but prosecutors believe that many of them are racketeering enterprises.)

Leslie Caldwell, another federal prosecutor in Brooklyn, won a conviction against Cathy Palmer's would-be assassin, but otherwise she had had no prior experience with Asian organized crime when she was asked to take over the Wong case, which began in early November. Now she is being touted as the new Dragon Lady—a sobriquet for which she has no enthusiasm. "It's not something I ever aspired to," she said the other day.

Caldwell is thirty-seven, soft-spoken, and tallish, and has a pageboy haircut. She grew up in Pittsburgh, got her law degree at George Washington University, and practiced securities law at a Wall Street firm before becoming a federal prosecutor, in 1987. She says she has no predilection for the macabre but notes that "for some reason, I seem to get a lot of psychopaths."

Indeed, Caldwell has spent most of her eight years as a prosecutor handling one gruesome case after another, with an emphasis on homicidal drug dealers and murderers of law-enforcement personnel. She has convicted the cocaine boss Lorenzo Nichols for ordering the execution of his parole officer, and the cop-killer Howard Mason, who referred to Caldwell in open court as "that ho." More recently, she went after Gerald (Prince) Miller, the leader of a crack-dealing gang in Queens known as the Supreme Team, who had walked away from two state murder trials, although during the second one a witness's father-in-law and sister-in-law were found stabbed to death, with the letter "P" carved in their bodies. "Prince was laughing at the system—he just had to be stopped," Caldwell says. In June, 1993, she got him convicted of running a narcotics enterprise. He will be sentenced in April, and faces life in prison.

Partly in recognition of her work on the Supreme Team case, Caldwell was put in charge last year of the newly created Violent Criminal Enterprise section of the Brooklyn United States Attorney's Office. The Clifford Wong case seemed to suit her perfectly—the Tung On Boys were extremely violent. Wong, who is forty and was the youngest tong boss in Chinatown, deployed his gang to protect his territory and that of his alleged partner, Paul Lai, who is the boss of the Tsung Tsin tong. After a feud with the Ghost Shadows left one of the Tung On Boys dead, in February of 1992, Wong and Lai were "looking weak" and "losing face," Caldwell told the jury in her opening statement. That month, three Tung On Boys in ski masks burst into a pool hall in the Village popular with the Ghost Shadows and opened fire. They killed James Rou, a seventeen-year-old honor student who had no connection with any gang.

Clifford Wong was found guilty of ordering the pool-hall assault—and therefore of Rou's murder—among various other crimes. His sentencing is scheduled for June, and he will almost certainly receive life without parole. Also in June, Caldwell will deliver her opening statement in the case against Paul Lai, who is being tried separately. Lai is an important man in Chinatown: he was an Asian-affairs adviser to former Governor Mario Cuomo, has no criminal record, and has long maintained that his tong is legitimate. Clifford Wong was the first tong boss in America to be convicted of racketeering. If Leslie Caldwell has her way, Paul Lai will be the second. ♦

This week's contributors: Hal Espen, Amy Wilentz, Alison Rose, Fredric Dannen.

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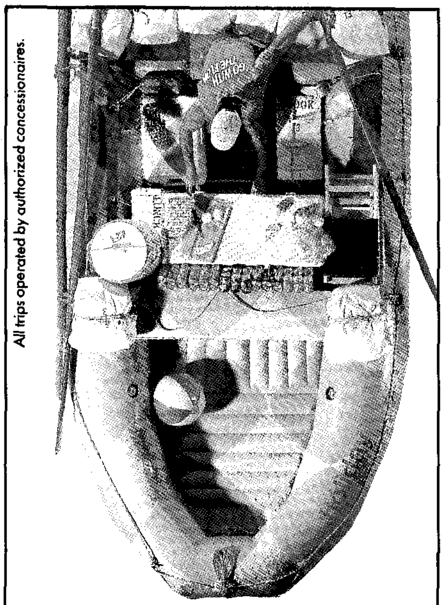

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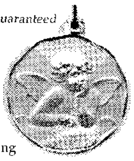

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

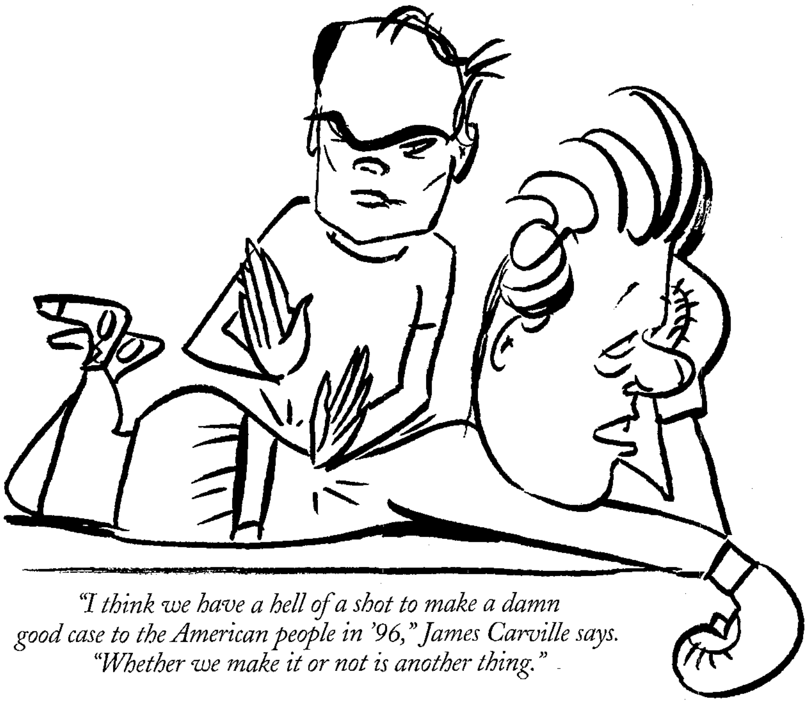
A PLACE CALLED FEAR

Clinton's strategists are searching for a way to win in 1996, and hoping that the scarier elements of the Republican revolution will find it for them.

BY MICHAEL KELLY

ABOUT the political consultant James Carville there has always been a lingering air of ham. Over the past several years of book touring and speechifying, Carville has perfected, and settled into more or less full time, the character he created to serve as his professional persona—the Ragin' Cajun, the political consultant as Howard Beale, hopped up and ticked off and full of mad, sparking genius. During Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign, the Ragin' Cajun was a great hit. Carville played hot to George Stephanopoulos's boyishly feral cool, and, while Stephanopoulos danced and spun around the awkward and endless questions of the candidate's character, Carville confronted them with squalls of mock fury. "Yew tell me what he did that was wrong! Yew tell me!" he would holler an inch from the fogging spectacles of a reporter trying to ask a tentative question about the latest change in the story of Clinton and the draft. "Y'all the mee-dee-ah! Y'all the ones s'posed to be so gotdam smart! Yew tell me!"

Recently, Carville re-upped as a consultant to his most famous client. A couple of weeks ago, I went to see him in his office, a few blocks from the Capitol. He was sprawled on a sofa, wearing a red T-shirt and blue nylon running shorts that showed a vast expanse of winter-pale leg, and playing with his new puppy, a Cavalier King Charles spaniel. When I came in, he didn't get up, but he did put down, on the floor, the bottle of Coca-Cola that he had been sipping, to wave in desultory fashion. The dog jumped up and knocked the bottle over, spilling a fizzing flood over a telephone that happened to be there. "Lick dat up," Carville said to the dog, which had already starting licking. As we watched this pleasing sight, I asked Carville what he and his fellow-members of the Clinton political operation were doing



"I think we have a hell of a shot to make a damn good case to the American people in '96," James Carville says. "Whether we make it or not is another thing."

TOM BACHTEL

to get the President reëlected next year. His voice floated up from the supine, disgust and weariness mixed in nicely measured proportions under a blanket of drawl, like Tallulah Bankhead on a particularly bad ennui day. "Nuthin'," he said. "Fuckall," he said a couple of long beats later, and then, "No, nothing, shit."

I listened to Carville talk for the next hour and a bit, and his answer to my first question, it turned out, was the low point of his mood. After a while, he got around to admitting that the President's political operators were actually beginning to work to get him reëlected, and by the end he had worked himself up into something like his old form. But he never lost, in his voice or his arguments, the note of appalled wonder that is the cry of the wounded in the wars of politics.

"What we are trying to do in the short term is concentrate on more effective, faster research and response," said the man whose 1992 "War Room" research-and-response operation was a model of ruthless efficiency. "We know we got a problem there. One thing that showed graphically how fast the right wing has got at jumping at things was the response to the Foster nomination for Surgeon General. Man, they really hit us hard on that, and they dominated it for a couple news cycles. Now, back in the campaign, we used to be the ones that worked like that, but we lost it. I don't know how. I don't know why this stuff happens. When I first saw the news about the Foster nomination on TV, I turned to whoever the hell it was I was talking to, and I said, 'What about abortions, huh?' This guy is an ob-gyn, right? So what about abortions? I mean, it's just a natural question to ask given his profession. Right?"

Speaking of the Republican arguments to sharply limit government's role, which now drive the national discussion, as Clinton's arguments to expand government's activist role did only two years ago, Carville sputtered and fumed at the gullibility of the public and the inadequacy of the press. His plaintive refrain called to mind the 1992 cry of the woman who later became his wife—the Bush campaign operative Mary Matalin. "This whole balanced-budget amendment is so phony," he griped. "I tell you, people just don't understand what's at stake here. You see anything enlightening in this whole damn debate? I mean, it's just so *ridiculous*. How can you say people are getting informed in this country? I mean, how can the media look themselves in the eye and say they are doing a good job? People are saying this shit"—here he raised his voice to a necktie-pinched falsetto to mimic a Republican budget hawk—" 'We got to have this amendment; it's the most important thing we can do in this country.' And it's just *nonsense*. I mean, it's just, just— Why don't people understand that the whole thing is just a bunch a nonsense? Gotdammit! A law without a remedy is not a law!"

It took Carville a good long while to bring himself around to directly addressing the question of 1996, and when he did he sounded like a man trying to sell himself on a dubious proposition. He stood up and began speaking as the candidate, casting himself as Clinton on a stage somewhere in 1996: "I came here to make a better America. And, by the way we measure a better America, it *is* better. There are more people working than on the day I took office. There are more people in prison cells than on the day I took office. There are more police on the street than on the day I took office. There are more people enjoying family and medical leave than on the day I took office, and there are more children immunized than on the day I took office. Because of what I did in office, the sales of forty-four thousand handguns to criminals were stopped and two thousand fugitives trying to buy handguns were stopped."

Carville, returning to his own voice, warmed to the pitch. "The Ronald Reagan question—'Are you better off now than you were four years ago?'—we don't have an answer to that down yet, but we will. Why, we can go out to California and make the case on what we did there on earthquake relief. Yes, I think we have a *hell* of a shot to make a damn good case to the American people in '96. Whether we make it or not is another thing—but I think we *can* make it." He was up on his legs when he said that, waving his finger in the air, in classic Carville style, but then he sank back onto the sofa, and his voice dropped as he continued, "But we've got to feel our way to it. For now, we've got to lay low. Let the newcomer have his way. 'Cause, you know, we're not going to get heard right now anyway. To everything there is a season, you know."

ACTUALLY, as Carville knows, the seasons are changing. In politics, as in fashion, the fall styles are introduced in the preceding spring, and the campaign to refashion and reëlect Bill Clinton has quietly begun. It is a campaign with a particularly pointed theme—the theme of fear. Specifically, it is the fear of conservatism untrammelled, the fear that without a Democratic President the Republicans will run amok—will become rampaging elephants trampling Social Security recipients, schoolkids at lunch, and Big Bird. While there is general agreement among Democratic strategists that the President cannot win reëlection solely by going negative, there is also a widespread sense that he cannot win without doing so. To a very real degree, 1992's candidate of hope must become 1996's candidate of fear.

"I'll tell you what their slogan won't be," one Democratic campaign professional says. "It won't be 'Four More Years.' In 1992, people thought that this was it, the chance they had been waiting for, the moment when the sixties generation finally stepped up to the plate and ran the country. Well, now these Clinton guys have given definition to that idea, and they can't run on hope anymore. What argument is left for reëlection? In '96, the Democrats run on fear: the Republicans will take away your school lunches; they'll take away your Social Security; they're bad people."

The President's chief political advisers are in adamant agreement that he must develop a strong positive message, and are less in agreement on the question of how aggressively to play the negative card. Nevertheless, the fear campaign is already under way. On the March 17th edition of the "Today" show, to cite one example, the White House chief of staff, Leon Panetta, likened the House Republicans' proposal to cut seventeen billion dollars from the current federal budget to parents who "take their kids' school-lunch money and go out and have one hell of a time

"Dear Sirs: Yes! I would like to learn more about Rogaine with minoxidil."

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on the town." The G.O.P. that Panetta described was, to borrow a Republican phrase, the enemy of normal Americans. "You know, this country is not about robbing our children in order to provide . . . tax cuts to the wealthy," Panetta said. "That's not what this country is about."

Officially, the Clinton reëlection effort will begin sometime in April, when the Democratic finance chairman, Terence McAuliffe, opens a Washington operation to start generating the forty-four million dollars that Clinton's strategists expect to spend in the Democratic primaries alone. In the meantime, a small group of advisers and consultants, led by the deputy White House chief of staff, Harold Ickes, has begun examining the central question: How can Bill Clinton get from the place where he is now to a place from which he might be returned to office? Ickes, who is heading the nascent reëlection effort under the close eye of Hillary Rodham Clinton (who is reportedly involved down to the level of minor hiring decisions), has already put together a rough timetable for the Democratic primary season, and has begun the business of figuring strategy, budget, and personnel on a state-by-state basis.

"Obviously, people in various states are becoming antsy about what to do, and are asking us to provide direction, and that direction is being provided, especially in New Hampshire, Iowa, California, and Illinois," Ickes told me. "In some states, we are looking to begin putting people on the ground, and in others we are looking for better communication. We are starting to put together state plans—what you could call political profiles—with an eye to running each state almost as its own, particular campaign."

If, as this process begins, James Carville sounds a touch discouraged at times, that is not surprising. Although Bill Clinton has risen slightly from the nadir of his approval ratings, he is a chronically unpopular President. In surveys conducted by the President's own chief pollster, Stanley Greenberg, Clinton enjoys the consistent, stable support of between forty-three and forty-six per cent of the respondents. Given polling's margins of error, this means that Clinton's dependable support is not appreciably more than the forty-three per cent of the voters who sent him to the White House as a minority President in the three-way race of 1992. The Republican pollster Frank Luntz says his surveys show Clinton's hard-core support to be even lower than this. "We asked a question recently in a national survey of a thousand people: 'Would you want your son or daughter to grow up to be like Bill Clinton?'" Luntz says. "Sixteen per cent said yes. Seventy-two per cent said no. When we ask people if Clinton represents their values, he pulls only about a third. Basically, you've got about a third of Americans committed to voting for him, about forty per cent committed to voting against him, and we're fighting over the remaining twenty-five per cent."

When one looks at the matter state by state, which is how a campaign puts together the two hundred and seventy electoral votes it takes to elect a President, the scene is grimmer yet for Clinton. In 1992, Clinton won the election by taking the Midwest and the Northeast, including all of New England and most of the Eastern Seaboard; adding California; and picking up a fair number of states in the South (Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Tennessee, and West Virginia) and in the West (Colorado, Kansas, Nevada, New Mexico, Montana, Oregon, and Washington). If the 1996 elections were held today, it is unlikely that Clinton would win any state in the South, with the possible exception of his home state of Arkansas and the more uncertain case of Vice-President Al Gore's home state of Tennessee. In the West, where the Clinton Administration has angered voters with its support of gun-control measures and its intrusions into land and water issues that are a subject of perennial antigovernment anger, and where the voters went overwhelmingly Republican in the 1994 races, Clinton would probably take only two or three states at best.

If one assumes that Clinton will not go into the 1996 electoral season with the circumstances of his Presidency radically altered (such as, say, his becoming the leader of a nation at war), the electoral picture of today is likely to remain pretty much the same. While a Republican candidate counting on all or almost all of the South and West could afford to lose several of the industrial states of the Northeast and Midwest, and California, Clinton would have to win every one of these states, and California, to offset his losses in the South and West.

A veteran strategist of national Democratic campaigns offers a cold-eyed and somewhat bitter analysis: "In 1994, Ann Richards ran for reëlection as governor of Texas with a solid sixty-per-cent approval rating. She ran in a race too close to call against George W. Bush, and she ran as a solid populist, neither left nor right—smart. George Bush got sixty-six per cent of the white male vote and fifty-four per cent of the white female vote. In Tennessee, Jim Sasser ran for reëlection to the Senate as a New Democrat in what was supposed to be a walkaway race. He lost with thirty-two per cent of the white male vote. In California, Kathleen Brown, running for governor and bouncing back and forth between 'I am a liberal' and 'I am not,' got twenty-six per cent of the white male vote—seventy per cent of the white males who voted in California voted for Pete Wilson. If I were Clinton, this pattern would concern me. If you take a scissors and go across the Ohio River and cut off everything south of it, and hand it to the Republican nominee for President when he steps off the podium, and then hand him most of the West, too, plus toss in an average of fifty-four per cent of the white male vote nationwide—well, I don't mean to be alarmist, but this is getting a little dicey."

Moreover, Clinton faces the possibility of a challenge from within his own party, a prospect that the President's political advisers are taking seriously. "At this point, I don't expect a primary challenge," Ickes said. "But we are preparing for the eventuality, and we will not be caught off guard if there is one. If we weren't preparing for the contingency, we wouldn't be starting fund-raising this early." Already, two Democrats—Missouri's Representative Richard Gephardt and New Jersey's Senator Bill Bradley—have made challenging noises. If Clinton is tarred in either of the two ongoing investigations by independent counsels into his personal and campaign finances, one of the two waverers might actually make the leap.

Heading into this difficult terrain, Clinton is hampered by the unusual and unhappy position he finds himself in after twenty-six months in office: he has failed to fill his own shoes. In 1992, he correctly gauged the angry, nearly desperate mood of the country, and ran as a man who still believed "in a place called Hope"—as a candidate of immense promise. Or, rather, promises: a restored economy that would provide millions of new jobs; the federal deficit halved within four years without touching Social Security or Medicare and with a middle-class tax cut; a large increase in government spending on domestic programs; universal health care; the end of "welfare as we know it"; the reform of political-financing practices; the guarantee of a college education for any qualified student willing to work in a national-service program; a national apprenticeship program that would teach crafts to high-school graduates and a program to require businesses to pay for the continuing retraining of their workers; the reversal of government policy barring homosexuals from the armed forces; the establishment of a network of community banks in poor city neighborhoods.

A number of things have happened to render this grand image of Clinton inoperable, as the White House press secretary might say. First, it developed that several important Clinton promises contradicted one another—as when, in the 1993 budget battle, the spending promises collided with the deficit-cutting promises. Second, it turned out that Clinton clearly suffered from a peculiarly political sort of learning disability: he had a hard time distinguishing between his promise to do something and the reality of having done it. As the *New Republic* writer and editor Leon Wieseltier noted early in the Administration, the President often "seems to think that he has acted when he has merely spoken." Third, although Clinton did fulfill a number of his campaign promises (most notably, the economy has done well under his Administration, with both unemployment and inflation at impressively low levels), many of the higher-profile ones (the middle-class tax cut, universal health care, halving the federal deficit, campaign-finance reform) proved to be undeliverable, at least by Clinton and a Democratic Congress. Fourth, the President's Administration developed a chronic susceptibility to adolescent behavior, manifested by sudden reversals of passion, an incapacity for determined consistency, a talent for lapses in atten-

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tion and judgment, and an inclination to dissemble in a tight spot. Fifth, the essential political idea behind Clinton's electoral success—that of a third-way politics, which would avoid the "false choices" of traditional conservatism and liberalism—proved to be a great deal more workable as a Renaissance Weekend concept than as a reality. Sixth, Whitewater. Seventh, recurrent bimbo eruptions. Eighth, the elections of 1994.

What remains of the Clinton who was elected in 1992 is a diminished and confusing figure. Remarkably, according to a number of Clinton's advisers, the primary task confronting this most public and prolix of Presidents as he faces the voters after more than three years in the national eye is to define who he is and what he stands for.

"The President has a style of decision-making that is thorough and searching and multidimensional, and he doesn't make John Wayne kinds of decisions but instead thinks things out in a very serious way and hears all the options, and for that reason it is kind of difficult for the public to perceive the direction he is moving in," Richard W. Riley, the Secretary of Education and a close adviser to Clinton, avers. "I think one politically fortunate thing about having the divided government now is that it does enable the President to more clearly define himself. . . . The November election has enabled Bill Clinton to make clear a better definition of where he is and what his thrust is."

A Democratic strategist involved in the reëlection effort offered this observation: "I would guess he's got to have his feet on the ground, be pretty much defined, by this Fourth of July. By that date, it has got to be pretty obvious to people: This is what the President is, this is what he's about, this is what he is for and what he is against. I know this is the thing that has been lacking so far, but elections do have a tendency to focus the mind."

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"Sometimes I wish they'd never perfected setless television."

As Clinton's advisers see it, the President's definitional problem boils down to the not exactly winning question of whether he is fit to lead the country, and it is this question, they say, that the 1996 election will revolve around. Ickes is blunt about the challenge. "The over-all issue in the 1996 campaign is going to be this question of leadership," he told me. "The question will be: Is the country prepared to have Bill Clinton lead for another four years, and that question basically boils down to whether they trust him, whether they think he has done a good job. And whether they are willing to place the nation under his stewardship for the next four years."

THE first problem with redefining Clinton is that there is no consensus among his advisers on what the 1996 model of the Democratic leader should look like. The lack of agreement begins with the basic question of what the Republican sweep of the 1994 election meant. Some of those who have Clinton's ear—notably Vice-President Gore and Al From, the president of the centrist Democratic Leadership Council—argue that the election represented a historic shift in national politics, a repudiation of the old New Deal/Great Society political order. Perhaps the most elaborate analysis of this view of the election comes from a Republican document that has been circulating, samizdat fashion, from Xerox to fax to Xerox among Washington Democrats. The analysis, written by the Republican pollster Fred Steeper, uses exit polls to assert that 1994 "was not driven by such non-policy factors as Clinton's personal unpopularity, anger with 'politics as usual' and 'gridlock,' or unhappiness over the economy." Rather, it "was a policy election," he wrote. "The voters perceived Republicans as representing a conservative direction and Democrats as representing a liberal direction and chose accordingly more than they have ever done in perhaps over sixty years." If Steeper is right, and the ideological temper of the country does not reverse itself during the next year and a half, then Clinton must

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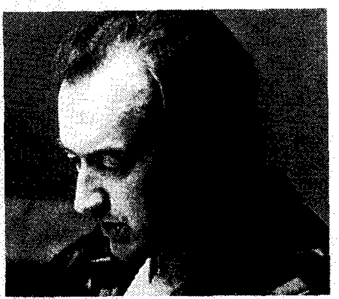

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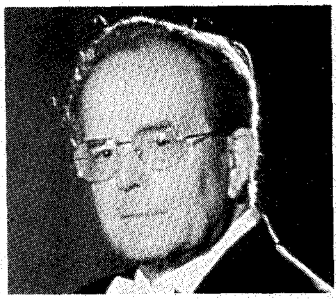

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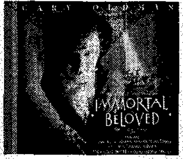

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run in 1996 as a candidate of essentially conservative values.

But most of those who have Clinton's ear (a notoriously promiscuous organ) hold that 1994 represented not a vast ideological shift or a repudiation of the old liberal order but a failure to communicate to middle-class voters that the Clinton Administration and the Democrats were working in their interests, at a time when those voters were inordinately anxious about their futures. Among the most prominent members of this camp are Mrs. Clinton, Carville, Ickes, and Stephanopoulos, the President's senior adviser. "The discussion is still up in the air," Ickes told me. "I and others do not think it was a seismic shift. I do not think the country is more conservative as much as I think it is more nervous, and more scared and more unsure of itself. I would analogize the country in terms of the Great Depression. I think we are going through enormous social changes—changes that have been building, to some degree, for a decade or more. People are floundering, and wondering what the new direction is, what the new social compact is. People are very nervous about their jobs, their futures."

The competing interpretations of 1994 necessarily give rise to competing visions of what Bill Clinton should do to make himself a stronger candidate in 1996. Should he join the Republicans in a conservative overhaul of government and social policy? Or should he attack that overhaul and defend the values of New Deal/Great Society politics, to scare nervous swing voters away from Republicanism and to reassure the shrinking Democratic base, now composed mostly of women, blacks, and highly educated upper-middle-class liberals? Or should he concentrate his energies on convincing middle-class voters that his Administration truly has done a lot to improve their lives?

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the answer so far has been to try all of the above. The emerging Clintonian position for 1996, which both the President and his surrogates have been testing in speeches and talking points over the past month, attempts to present the President as (1) a constructive leader, who deserves a great deal more credit for all he has done to make America a wealthier, stronger nation; (2) a conservative at heart, in basic agreement with the broad ideas of the Republican agenda (limiting government, cutting the deficit, reforming the welfare state, cracking down on crime, supporting society's traditional moral values, rethinking affirmative action); and (3) a solidly liberal Democrat, championing government policies that protect and benefit the average American, and opposing a Republican movement that threatens to starve the poor, punish women, blacks, and union workers, and reward the rich with tax breaks at the expense of the middle class.

The obvious difficulty with this ecumenical approach is its inherent schizophrenia. The disparate and contradictory elements in the President's posture require a unifying theme that will energize the Democratic Party's liberal core and yet also attract voters from the more conservative pool of the general population. This is why the idea of fear of Republican extremism is so important. In theory, at least, fear has the potential to bring together the opposing elements of the Clinton persona—the potential to give both frustrated liberals and swing-vote moderates a compelling reason to vote for Clinton, as the Democratic political analyst Bob Beckel explains. "I hope that the debate going on internally is not about going negative but about how negative is too negative," Beckel said. "One of the things coming out of the debate is a sense that we cannot wait until the fall to make a beginning, and that is why you are seeing a lot of this hammering on the themes of the Republicans' mean-spiritedness—hurting women and children, and so on. That is already helping on the margins, and it will help more later. With poor people, black and white, you can get a lot of angst going on in the communities on this, hitting hard on the theme that these guys are going to stick it to you so they can give the money to their rich buddies. With women, also, you've got to hit this, because a lot of the hold-your-nose-and-vote-for-Clinton vote is going to be women."

At least some of Clinton's advisers believe that a campaign of fear not only will help define the Republicans in negative terms but also is essential to shaping a sharp, positive image of their candidate. Richard Riley talks about defining Clinton as the candidate of "the average American," and says that that definition will depend in large measure on Clinton's success in contrasting himself with Republicans as the *enemies* of the average American. "As we get into this election cycle—and it's beginning now and moving quickly—I think people will begin to clearly see the President as a person who goes into his office in the morning and thinks about average Americans," Riley told me. "This is going to become very clear to people now that they have this opportunity to compare his views and his leadership and his thrust with those of the other side."

ON the afternoon of March 2nd, as the Republicans' balanced-budget amendment headed down the roll call toward a one-vote defeat in the United States Senate, the Republican pollster Frank Luntz sat at the head of a long wooden table in his conference room and performed the modern ritual of the angry citizen, talking back to C-SPAN.

"Mr. Wellstone," the caller of the roll intoned.

"Mr. Wellstone votes socialist," Luntz muttered in response. "The putz."

"Mr. Packwood."

"Mr. Packwood is drinking. Mr. Packwood, get your hands off Ms. Feinstein."

"Ms. Mikulski."

"Ms. Mikulski gets half a vote."

"Mr. Gramm."

"Mr. Gramm votes and will now go back to fund-raising."

Luntz's pique was understandable. The Senate defeat of one of the primary objectives in the Contract with America, which Luntz had helped draft, was the first important triumph in the Democratic campaign to portray the Republican agenda as frighteningly radical, and to position the President as the common-sense defender of the public interest. Since then, the Democratic strategy has continued to score, giving the President and his party their first smell of success since the disaster of the 1994 elections. As polls show an increasing nervousness among voters about the scope and the specifics of the Republican agenda, the Party's congressional wing has begun to fissure under pressure, with schisms forming over issues ranging from abortion to welfare. The Democrats' campaign is working because, although it is certainly demagogic, it is also rooted in reality. What the dominant, radical wing of the Republican Party is proposing—the dismantling of the welfare state, the devolution of power from the federal government to the states, the end of a federal spoils system that has for generations doled out goodies to voters in every congressional district in every class from dirt-poor to plutocrat—*is* extreme.

Consider the Republican welfare proposals. A clear majority of Americans desire, in a general sense, an end to a welfare system that has encouraged and perpetuated the existence of a huge and wretched population on the dole. But the specific Republican proposals for effecting that end are bound to strike many people as harsh and cruel. The Congressional Budget Office, in its report on the welfare-reform bill proposed by House Republicans, noted that the measure would cause 1.7 million legal aliens to lose their Medicaid benefits and 1.1 million to lose their food stamps; eight hundred thousand people currently receiving food stamps to be denied coverage; nearly four hundred thousand disabled children and adults to lose their Supplemental Security benefits; and 2.8 million low-income families to lose some or all of their benefits under the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program.

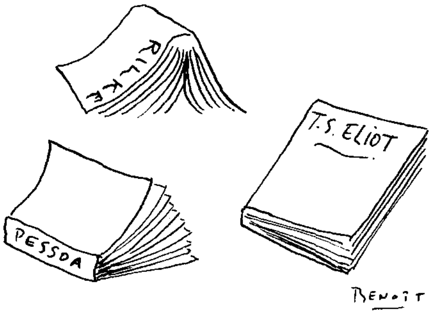
"What the Republicans have to face now is the reality of what they say people voted for in '94—less taxes and less government," Stephanopoulos argues. "If that reality means cutting school lunches to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy, that is not going to be attractive."

Luntz says that the polls clearly show the Republicans' vulnerability to this line of attack. "The Democrats have a very good ear for the language of fear," Luntz says. "And this is a battle of words and phrases. With the twist of a few words, you can go from forty per cent to seventy per cent on an issue, or vice versa. On cutting spending, attitudes are mixed, and it very much depends on how you frame the debate. If you call it cutting welfare spending, you get seventy-per-cent support for Republican proposals. But when you make it more specific, and use Democratic language—taking people off welfare whether or not they have a job, taking away funding for school lunches—that support drops down to forty per cent."

It is very likely that—as the debate continues to rise in volume and pitch, with the expected introduction in May of a Republican plan to balance the federal budget over seven years—public support for the Republican proposals will erode further, and support for Clinton and the Democrats will increase. After the President begins to campaign hard, Republicans expect to see him gain even more.

Bill Clinton is the best campaigner in America, and, as George Bush, Paul Tsongas, and Jerry Brown can attest, he is especially gifted at the negative. When a dyspeptic fellow like Bob Dole says something harsh about an opponent, it comes out sounding even meaner than intended. When Clinton, who so patently wants to be liked, turns nasty, he sounds as though he is reluctantly voicing an unpleasant truth. "I don't underestimate Bill Clinton," the Republican National Committee chairman, Haley Barbour, says. "This is not going to be shooting fish in a barrel. He is a tremendous performer who is quite agile; he shares with the hummingbird the ability to turn a hundred and eighty degrees on the wing."

But Barbour does not sound truly worried, and the reason for his insouciance is rooted in the lessons of 1994. In the closing weeks of the campaign, when the possibility of an overwhelming Republican victory was beginning to sink in, Bill Clinton ran hard on fear. The Republicans, he warned, would establish "a government of fear, not hope; a government of blame, not responsibility." The G.O.P., he said, would finance its costly tax cuts by raiding Social Security and slashing Medicare. The White House budget office pumped out reams of analysis to buttress the argument, which was echoed by Democrats all over the country, and was widely broadcast in the media. On Election Day, however, voters picked Republicans on every level of government from coast to coast, and shortly thereafter the President began talking about resurrecting his old, long-abandoned promise of a middle-class tax cut.



What this suggests is something Ickes, Carville, and Stephanopoulos all acknowledge: fear isn't enough. There is, of course, a positive theme as well as a negative one to the Clinton argument, and he will make it. He can and will run on his record of accomplishments in office, and they are real enough. But he didn't get the traction he needed out of that record in 1994, and when his aides talk about the accomplishments he can hope to eke out of a hostile Congress during the remainder of his term, it is hard to see how that situation will change by November of 1996. ("We're going to have some successes," Stephanopoulos says. "The President will sign the unfunded-mandates bill; he will continue to reinvent government.") With luck, the economy will hold, and Clinton will be able to make the argument that Carville was previewing—that most Americans are better off than they were when Clinton took office. Yet he made that argument in the fall of 1994, and a majority of voters refused to buy it.

The essential problem remains. Fear of the other can't define Clinton as a leader, and Clinton's ambiguous record can't, either. "The President has to clearly point up the consequences of the Republicans' ideas as they come forward," Stephanopoulos says. "But, at the same time, he has to offer a positive sense of what his vision is."

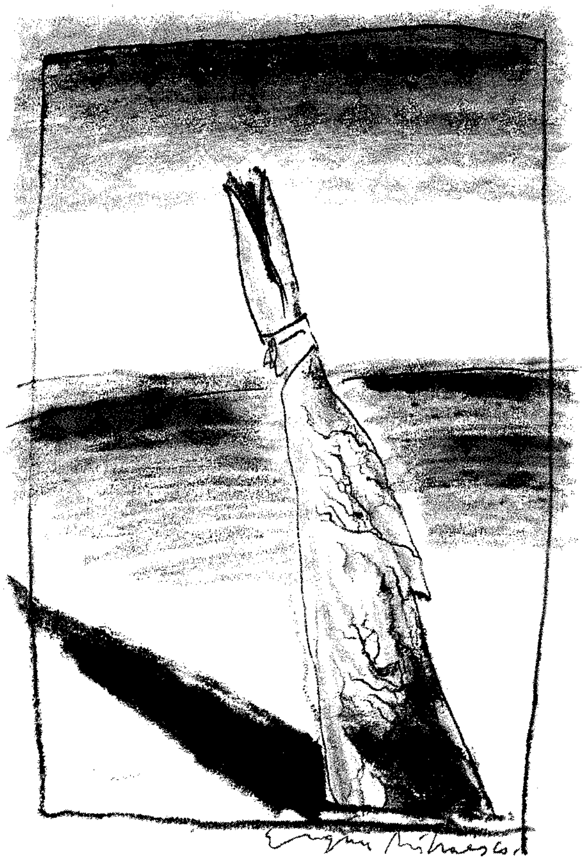
What, though, is that vision? What is the coherent, clear, connected picture of who Clinton is, what he stands for, and where he wants to take the nation? And what can a man who has been for, against, and for the same tax cut in the space of three years do to convince voters that he will stick with that vision once he is safely back in office? Ickes is right. In the end, the 1996 campaign isn't going to be about the horror of Newt Gingrich. It is going to be about the leadership of Bill Clinton. ♦

LETTER FROM IRELAND

DUBLIN'S EPIPHANY

In response to the peace process and popular demands for a more liberal society, Catholic Ireland is learning to play the power game by new rules.

BY COLM TÓIBÍN



EUGENE MIHAESCO

I HAVE often wondered when the first chink, the first fissure, appeared. When did I first realize that extraordinary social and political change was going to come to Ireland? Did I witness it and not notice? There were moments when it seemed as though someone had turned on a light illuminating the whole country, right across the midlands, from Dublin to Galway—a sudden flash that told you everything about the Irish future if you watched it properly and judged it correctly. Yet if you had told me a few years ago that a series of scandals and unsettling developments would force the nation to confront the issues of abortion, homosexuality, and the sexual conduct of the clergy, and that the Prime Minister of Ireland and the leader of the political wing of the Irish Republican Army would join in cordial discussions at the White House, as they did two weeks ago, I would not have believed it.

I remember a concert in Galway by the blues singer Mary Coughlan in 1987. Between songs, she mentioned that in the sixties girls in Galway had been forbidden to wear bikinis by the arch-conservative Bishop Michael Browne. She wanted, she said, to dedicate the song she had just sung to him. She looked at us all and grinned, and since the last song had been about debauchery and shamelessness, this got a huge cheer. Mary Coughlan was laughing at a dead bishop (Browne died in 1979), and then she went further. "This next song," she said, in her West of Ireland drawl, "is for the bishop we have now. The one who drinks and drives." A louder cheer went up, and there was laughter. Eamonn Casey, the Bishop of Galway, had recently been found guilty, in London, of driving while drunk. At blues concerts, bishops, suddenly, were fair game. I went back to Dublin and dined out on the story.

Casey could survive such laughter. He was an ebullient, clubbable figure—a superb television performer, who enjoyed his power and popularity. He led Trocaire—the bishops' agency for aid to the Third World—with passion and a certain radicalism, but he ran his own diocese in Galway with iron authority. He seemed to have no difficulty in concurring with the conservative statements of his colleagues on matters of faith and public morality.

On May 6, 1992, I was at a party in Dublin when two journalists told me that the news was out: Bishop Casey had a grownup son; the mother, an Ameri-

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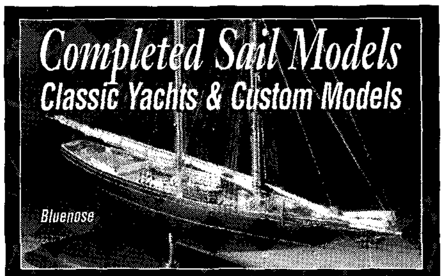

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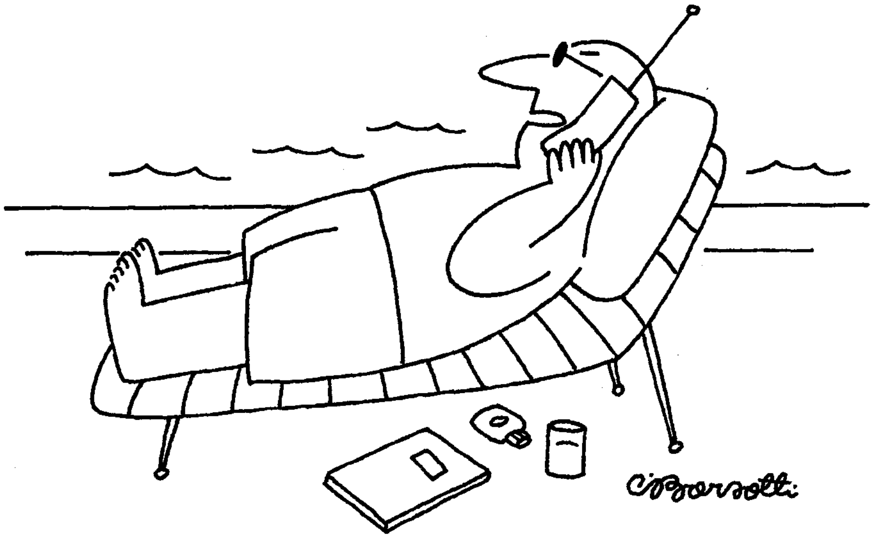
can of Irish extraction, had disclosed the fact in an interview with a reporter for the *Irish Times*. It would probably be in the next day's papers, they said. For years, it had been clear that something like this would have to come into the open. In the mid-eighties, rancorous battles had been fought over divorce and abortion, and the liberal side—our side—had lost. There were times when we felt that the country was going to burst at the seams with hypocrisy. During a national referendum on abortion in 1983, it was estimated that almost four thousand Irish women a year travelled to England to have abortions, which were illegal in Ireland. It was known then, too, that some of the politicians who for political gain were fanning the flames of the pro-life movement had been rather active on the sidelines of their marriages. But the bishops, with the exception of Eamonn Casey, were an elderly, quiet-living, and sexless lot. And Casey seemed to use up all his energy driving fast cars, appearing on talk shows, and running the Third World.

I woke at eight the following morning and turned on "Morning Ireland," an hour-long news program. The Casey revelation was the first item, and I lay back and wondered how this news would affect the hold of the Catholic faith on Ireland. Annie Murphy, the mother of Casey's son, came on the air and began to speak openly and candidly about her affair with Eamonn Casey and her reasons for going public.

She used a language that was new to us here. This woman had an American accent; she spoke like someone who had been in therapy and had learned how to talk about herself. Her affair with the Bishop was not a matter of shame. She called him "Eamonn." She said his name with tenderness; he was no longer a bishop who had transgressed but a lover who had, over a number of months in 1973 and 1974, made her intensely happy. Annie Murphy and her son, Peter, gave live radio interviews all day. In between the interviews, I spoke on the phone to friends, going over the best bits, wondering how Casey's colleagues, those deeply conservative old men, were taking the news.

DUBLIN had been slowly changing over the preceding twenty-five years. Until the sixties, the brightest and most ambitious sought to get out of Ireland. The community they left behind remained cautious and inward-looking. The rise of television, rock and roll, and consumer values was greeted by the general public with a mixture of mild disapproval and passive curiosity. But economic growth brought other changes, too. The parents of my generation began to concentrate on their children's education and prospects with a new, almost fierce intensity. In 1967, the year I started secondary school, the government introduced free secondary education, and the following year it introduced free university education for those below a certain income. We began to believe that we had a future.

Emigration resumed again in the mid-eighties, when recession hit Ireland. The departure of a new generation of the skilled and the unskilled came as a bitter disappointment. But for the journalists and writers and academics who stayed it was possible, most of the time, to pretend that the Church and the politicians did not exist, or were sour, corrupt jokes. You could manage a sort of internal exile. (This sensibility was exported in the lyrics and fervent vocal style of rock artists like U2 and Sinead O'Connor, whose best work captures that sense of isolation, of having to struggle for the right to imagine a country where you could belong.) And then you would suddenly be woken up from your dream Ireland by some public event that either promised change or threatened to take us back to the Middle Ages. No one I knew supported the Irish Republican Army or had any time for Irish nationalism. The I.R.A.'s bombing campaign and military strategy were bad enough, but it also seemed that the aims of the organization—to unite Ireland and force the British to withdraw—ignored the complexity of the division in Ireland. And no one in my circle went to Mass, even though the vast majority all around us were devout Catholics.



"No offense, Lou, but you're a money guy, not a movie guy."

But the Casey scandal, as it unfolded, reminded us of how conservative and anachronistic our society remained, even as it exposed the hypocrisy of the Church's moral edicts. Casey managed to elude the press and sneak out of the country; he went to New York, and then he disappeared. It was reported that anonymous donors reimbursed the Catholic Church for the hundred and fifteen thousand dollars of Church money he had paid Annie Murphy for child support, which only reinforced our suspicions about a hidden network of powerful Catholics protecting their own. For the next two years, the former Bishop (he was forced to take early retirement) and the Murphys were constantly in the news. Eamonn Casey was sighted by a journalist in Mexico, where he was learning Spanish; he moved to Ecuador and worked in a mission. Annie Murphy wrote a book and came to Ireland on a publicity tour. It was reported that Casey had begun to see Peter, his son. He attended the 1994 World Cup match between Ireland and Mexico in Orlando, Florida, and signed autographs for the fans.

It is unclear how much the Casey affair ultimately weakened the Church in Ireland, but Casey was the butt of countless jokes, and even the devout were mildly amused that someone in authority had been found out. The episode somehow seemed to clear the air. But the scandal was only one of several previously unimaginable incidents that began to transform both the moral and the political climate of Holy Catholic Ireland.

For seven decades, the two main political parties in Ireland have been Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, but the closest thing to a majority party has been Fianna Fáil. It was established in 1926, four years after independence, and was in power from 1932 until 1948. It called itself "the natural party of government" in Ireland—less a political party than a national movement. It claimed to represent, in some mystical way, the Gaelic and Catholic spirit of the nation. In the late forties and fifties, it was periodically replaced by various Fine Gael coalition governments, but Fianna Fáil ran the country for another sixteen-year stretch from 1957 to 1973, and thereafter regularly returned to power.

Early leaders, such as Eamon De Valera, were the men who had fought in the War of Independence, and they later became austere and conservative and fervently Catholic. In the town where I was brought up, you didn't just vote Fianna Fáil as a matter of choice, you *were* Fianna Fáil: it was part of your identity. The Party represented the lower middle class, the small farmer and grocer. Fianna Fáil politicians were fond of evoking a utopian Ireland, united and rural, Gaelic-speaking and economically self-sufficient. But the Party also had a pragmatic side. It promised to get the country moving, according to one of its perennial slogans. The Party could get you a job, if you had the right contacts.

In the sixties and seventies, the Party attracted a new breed of politician: men who were ready to use the old dreamy rhetoric to win elections, but who were hardheaded, too, possessing accounting skills as well as deep patriotic feelings. Among these ambitious self-made men was Albert Reynolds, the unlikely statesman who would become responsible for the first real breakthrough toward a permanent political settlement in Northern Ireland. He had made his fortune running dance halls in the midlands, and later built a pet-food factory near Longford. He exuded a sort of homely warmth, and prided himself on being a tough businessman at the same time. He was elected to the Irish Parliament in 1977 and appointed Minister for Industry and Commerce in 1979.

Fianna Fáil had always sided with the Church, and its members were uneasy with the onset of change in Irish society, the growth of the women's movement, and the relaxing of sexual mores. The Party had indirectly opposed an unsuccessful referendum to legalize divorce in 1986. It strongly opposed abortion. Reynolds and his colleagues were eager to concentrate on the economy and the problem of Northern Ireland, but they seemed to consider issues like contraception, the influence of the Catholic Church, and the rights of women to be sideshows—matters to be avoided or got out of the way. In power, Fianna Fáil was decisive, confident, and often arrogant. Like the Catholic Church, it had always been a monolith. It had been in opposition, but it had never had to share power. In 1989, that changed.

Reynolds became Prime Minister in early 1992, a few months before the Casey scandal broke. He found himself in a coalition with a minor party made up mainly of former members of Fianna Fáil, and later, after an election, was forced to accommodate and negotiate with the Labour Party. Labour had done increasingly well in Dublin, where the Fianna Fáil vote was declining, and Labour had no historic ties to the Catholic Church. The Party appealed to a growing progressive and liberal constituency. Fianna Fáil had always asserted that its refusal to join a coalition was one of its "core values." Now it had abandoned this core value, and at a time when other core values were being abandoned, too. People whose parents may have voted for Fianna Fáil had switched to the smaller parties and began asking for changes in the laws governing matters like divorce, homosexuality, and the sale of contraceptives.

On February 11, 1992, at his first press conference, Prime Minister Reynolds declared that his top priority was to stop the violence in Northern Ireland; he also pledged to devote himself to job creation and economic growth. But the issue that dominated his first weeks in power—abortion—was not of his choosing. It was reported that a fourteen-year-old girl from Tallaght, outside Dublin, had been raped and become pregnant. The assailant had been questioned by the police. (He later pleaded guilty to unlawful carnal knowledge.) The girl's parents took her to England to have an abortion, but before they left they asked the police if tissue from the fetus would help the prosecution to identify the culprit. In early February, the director of public prosecutions learned that the girl was seeking an abortion and notified Attorney General Harold Whelehan. (Abortion has always been illegal in Ireland, and ever since the referendum vote of 1983 "the right to life of the unborn" has been guaranteed in the Irish Constitution.) It was Friday, February 7th, and it would have been easy, several members of the Cabinet now agree privately, to delay consideration of the case until Monday morning, by which time the girl would have had her abortion. But the Attorney General immediately asked for and received an injunction preventing the victim from travelling to receive an abortion. Although the family had already arrived in England and the Irish courts had no jurisdiction there, the girl's parents decided to respect the wishes of the court and went back to Ireland before the abortion was performed. Ten days later, a justice of the High Court, the second-highest court in Ireland, upheld the injunction.

For weeks, the newspapers were full of stories about the X case, as it came to be known. (To protect the anonymity of the girl and her family, she was referred to as "X" in court documents.) Ireland suddenly seemed like a prison, a grim, unmerciful place. The X case came at a time when the anti-abortion movement had been prevailing in the courts, winning decisions that made it illegal for pro-choice organizations to disseminate information in Ireland about abortion facilities in England; these groups could not give out the phone numbers of English clinics, for instance.

The X case made Albert Reynolds' easygoing avuncularity seem hollow indeed. He prevaricated for days before inviting the girl's family to appeal to the Supreme Court, where they won the right to travel to England. In early

March, after two weeks of further legal maneuvering, the girl had an abortion. The whole episode seemed an appalling way to treat a fourteen-year-old who had already gone through such trauma. The foreign press marvelled at the medieval state of affairs in Ireland, a country not only tolerating a violent, long-running religious war in its northern region but now locked into a moral civil war in its south.

While Reynolds and his new administration tried not to get sidetracked by the X case, the Labour Party began to push harder for social reform. One of the Party's first priorities was to eliminate the remaining restrictions against the distribution of condoms. The sale of contraceptives and of literature promoting their use had been banned in Ireland until the Supreme Court declared the ban unconstitutional, in 1973. During the next six years, the purchase and use of contraceptives existed in a legal limbo as successive governments either failed or refused to enact legislation.

The Catholic bishops vehemently opposed a change in the law; their authority was reinforced by the government's timidity. In 1979, after secret negotiations with the bishops, the Fianna Fáil government managed to enact legislation allowing citizens to buy contraceptives if they obtained a prescription from a doctor. I had just started working as a journalist in Dublin at the time, and I had a field day writing about visits I paid to doctors, asking them to prescribe condoms for me (roughly fifty per cent refused), and taking whatever prescriptions I got to chemists' shops, only to be told at half the shops that they did not stock condoms. It was all part of the comedy of Irish life; our fate was determined by private meetings between elderly celibates and fearful politicians. It seemed that things would never change.

In 1985, the birth-control laws were further liberalized, this time without any consultation with the bishops. But condoms still were not widely available, and no one under the age of eighteen was permitted to purchase them. By 1993, however, the political landscape had changed: the Department of Health was run by a thirty-seven-year-old Labour Party politician who succeeded in passing legislation permitting the sale of condoms from vending machines. The bishops had given up the fight: there was hardly a murmur of dissent.

By the early nineties, the Victorian laws against homosexuality—laws that had been used against Oscar Wilde—were also under attack. Prime Minister Reynolds, at his first press conference, was asked about the prospects for gay rights in Ireland. He made it clear, smiling all the while, that his administration had more important matters to deal with than discrimination against homosexuals. It would be at "the bottom of the list of priorities," he said. He seemed uncomfortable dealing with the questions of sexual morality that had been burning issues over the past ten years.

The first challenge to the existing laws against homosexuality had come before the High Court in 1980. A gay man named David Norris, a Joyce expert who was a lecturer in English literature at Trinity College Dublin, had sought to have the statutes declared unconstitutional. His lawyer was Mary Robinson—the woman who in 1990 would be elected to a seven-year term as President of Ireland. (Although her role is essentially ceremonial and nonpartisan, she was nominated by the Labour Party and has made her support for the liberal agenda very clear. She has invited gay men and lesbians to her home, and she has delivered carefully nuanced speeches and statements advocating change and openness in Irish society.) The state had not enforced the existing laws since the sixties, and by the late seventies there was a thriving gay underground in Dublin and a growing gay-rights movement.

Norris lost in the High Court and thereupon appealed to the Supreme Court. Though two of the Supreme Court's five judges spoke strongly in his favor, he lost again, in a 3–2 decision. He then took his case to the European Court of Human Rights, in Strasbourg. The Irish government argued there that since it no longer enforced the laws against homosexuality it didn't need to change them. This time, Norris won, and in 1988 the European Court ordered the Irish government to repeal the laws. It immediately began to delay and make excuses, promising each year that it would reëxamine the laws and then doing nothing.

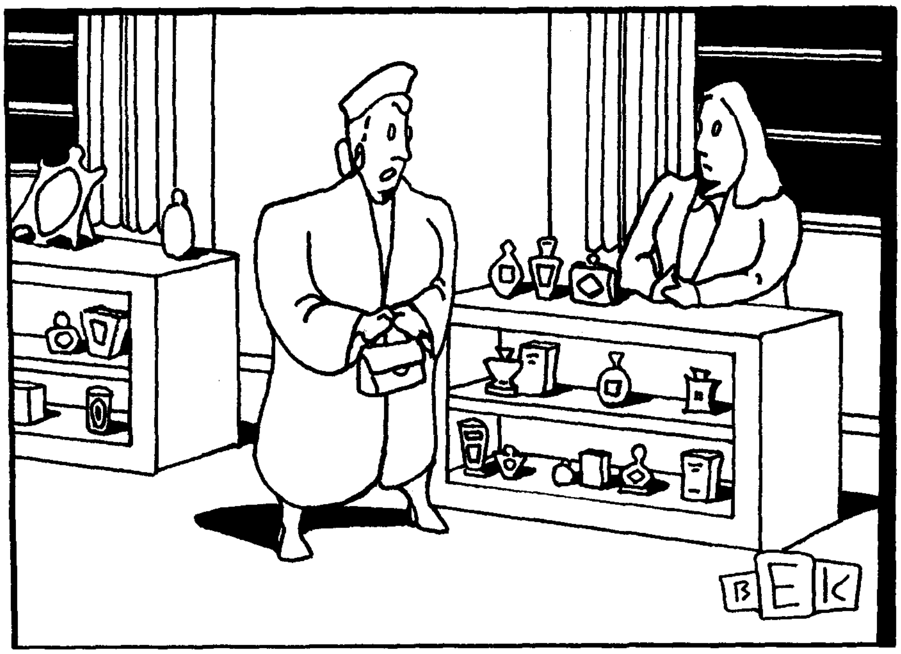
The Irish feel an enormous loyalty to the various European institutions that the nation joined after it became part of the European Economic Community, in 1973. Suddenly, we Irish were flouting Europe. Now something would have to be done, but it was almost impossible to imagine a rational debate in Parliament on homosexuality, and most politicians were desperately eager to avoid the subject. The Church kept up its pressure. I still don't know whether it was because of the Casey affair or the judgment of the European Court or the growing force of liberalism in the country, but in June, 1993, the laws were changed. In Britain, the age of consent for gay men had been set, in 1967, at twenty-one. (It was later lowered to eighteen.) In Ireland, without much protest and without a debate in Parliament, the age of consent for gay men was set at seventeen.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Reynolds continued to declare that solving the problem of Northern Ireland and stopping the killing there were his chief concerns. In an odd way, he was better qualified to succeed than his predecessors. Like John Major, his counterpart in Britain, he was a weaker version of what had gone before. But it struck me that, since both men had no rigid policy aims or core convictions, it might be easier for them than for others to make a deal on Northern Ireland. Reynolds was not unequivocally committed to a united Ireland, nor was Major adamant about preserving the union between Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Reynolds seemed only too ready to compromise, if that would work.

Over the years, the Republic and the North had moved apart: people in the Republic had slowly come to recognize that the Unionists had rights, too, and they were appalled by the cruelty of the I.R.A.'s campaign of bombing and assassination. Throughout the eighties, a kind of tacit consensus formed within the Irish urban middle class—that a united Ireland was something that could be sacrificed for a peaceful settlement. Now Reynolds, despite his caution, was ready to take advantage of this. In mid-1993, he apparently became convinced that the I.R.A. could be persuaded to declare a ceasefire. Everything he did was careful and measured. He seemed to be able to use language that did not offend Gerry Adams, the president of Sinn Fein, the political wing of the I.R.A., and his supporters, or alienate the British, or inflame Unionist opinion. I would not have predicted the self-possession and subtlety he demonstrated in the lead-up to the Downing Street Declaration of December, 1993, in which John Major stated that the people of Northern Ireland should decide their own future, rather than the British, and the Irish government acknowledged that the consent of the Unionists would be necessary for any settlement.

In the summer of 1994, just as Reynolds realized that a breakthrough might come in the negotiations with the I.R.A., his coalition partner, Dick Spring, the Deputy Prime Minister and leader of the Labour Party, tried to discuss with him the appointment of judges. Spring wanted to make sure that two pending vacancies—the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the President of the High Court—were filled with liberal-minded judges. Reynolds and Spring were collaborating closely on the issue of Northern Ireland, but Reynolds seemed not to understand how important the judicial appointments were to the Labour Party, so no decision was made and the issue remained unresolved. At the same time, the sectarian violence in the North intensified, and the prospects for peace appeared to be more remote than ever.

All this made the I.R.A. ceasefire at the end of August, 1994, seem truly miraculous. On September 6th, Reynolds stood, triumphant, on the steps of Government Buildings in Dublin shaking hands with Gerry Adams. From then until November, when he was forced to resign, Reynolds was on tour. He was in America; he was in Europe; he was in the Far East and Australia. He was the man who had engineered the end of history in Ireland, and he was running his lap of honor. He remained careful, every speech and gesture fine-tuned, but he paid little or no attention to what was going on at home, where he was still in a coalition government with the Labour Party. During his trip to Australia, in September, he was especially irritated by Irish journalists who he felt should have been reporting on his tour rather than asking him whether his intention to name Attorney General Harry Whelehan the President of the High Court could become an election issue, driving a wedge between the coalition parties.



"I need a change. Normally, I just wear the faint odor of vague discomfort and unhappiness."

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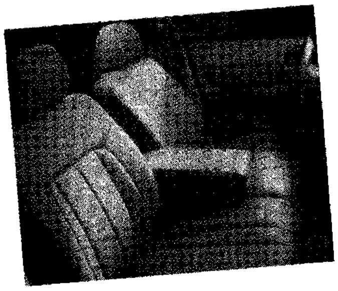
Ever since the X case, two years before, the Irish press had closely scrutinized the office of the Attorney General. It was widely believed by media observers and senior politicians that the Attorney General and his staff were susceptible to the influence of secret Catholic organizations such as Opus Dei and the Knights of Columbanus. Harry Whelehan, through his handling of the X case and his involvement with the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council, which provides counselling services for couples whose marriages are troubled, had rightly or wrongly become identified by liberals and supporters of the Labour Party as a right-wing Catholic. Because the President of the High Court can serve until the age of seventy-two, Whelehan, who was fifty, could, if he should gain the appointment, spend the next twenty-two years in one of the most sensitive positions in Irish public life. The Labour Party opposed his appointment, but after the I.R.A. ceasefire Albert Reynolds was in no mood to compromise with his partners in government.

In a way, Reynolds was caught between a historical Ireland and a real Ireland. The Prime Minister had brought an end to an ancient quarrel full of historical echoes and anachronistic rhetoric. The quarrel was real, because it dealt in murder, but much of the time the combatants, in their insistence on concepts like self-determination, martyrdom, and racial purity, seemed to belong to another century—or, at least, to a time before both Ireland and Britain ceded so much power to the European Union. And the quarrel itself certainly belonged to a time before a majority in the Republic of Ireland began to view tolerance as an essential aspect of democracy. In the real Ireland, the debate about the role of the Church and the authority of the state was going on in every parish. In the real Ireland, the electorate no longer gave Reynolds' party an over-all majority: he was forced to share power and make himself accountable to the Labour Party, which supported his work on the ceasefire but continued to emphasize the need for a liberal social agenda. The



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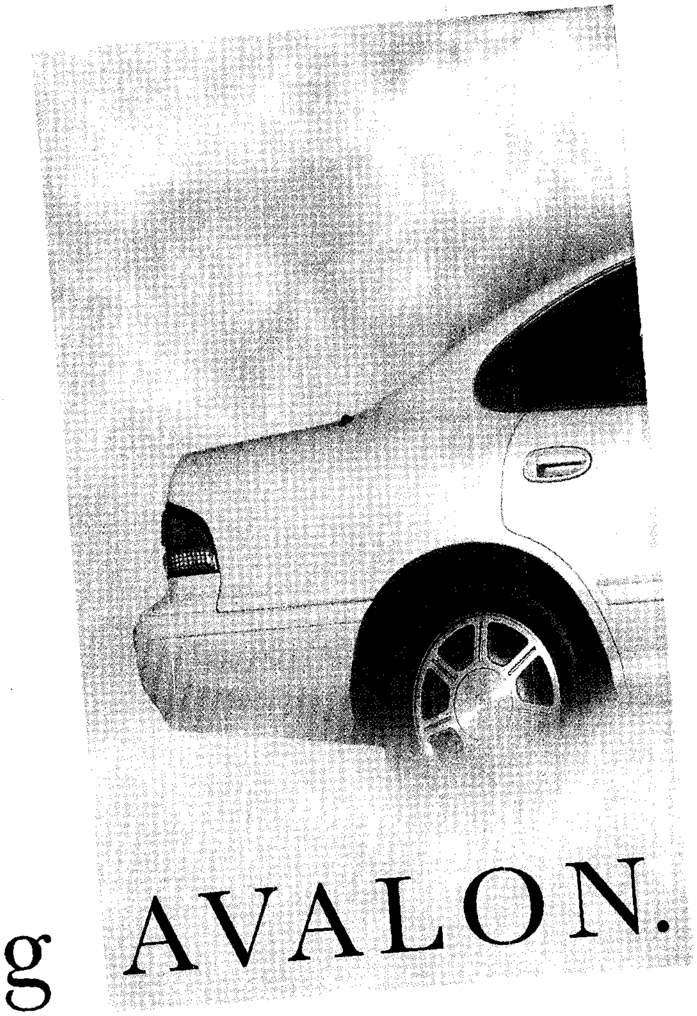

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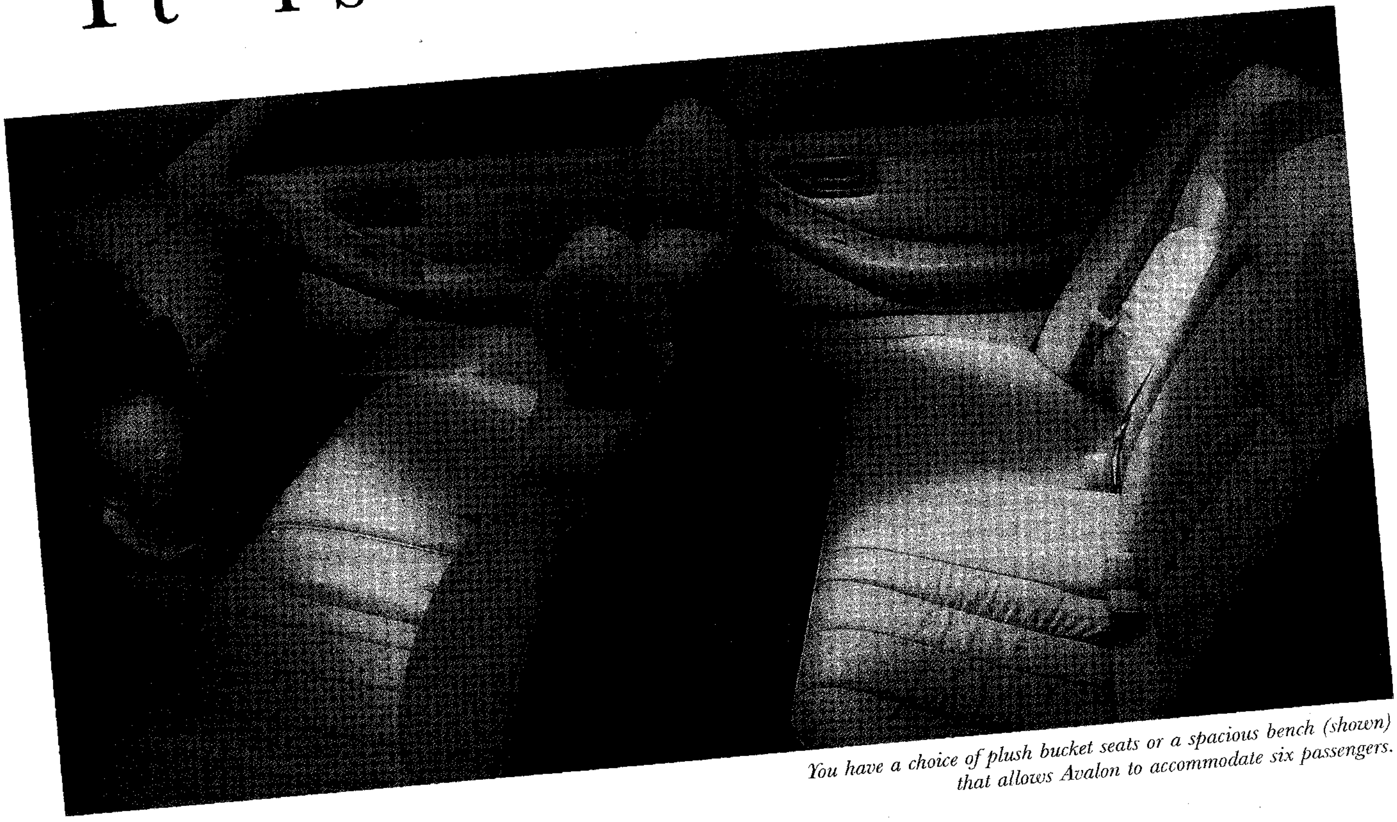

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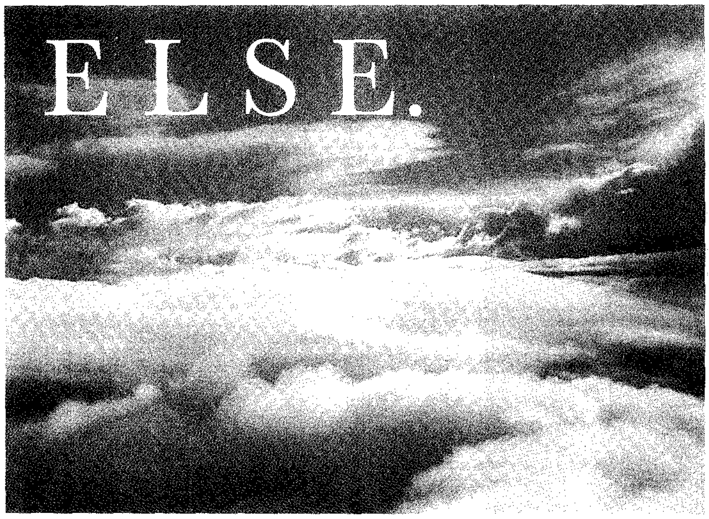

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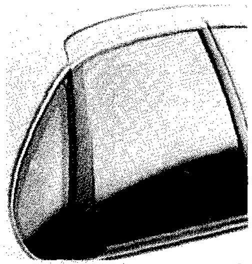


A liquid-filled engine mount makes a quiet, all-aluminum engine even quieter.

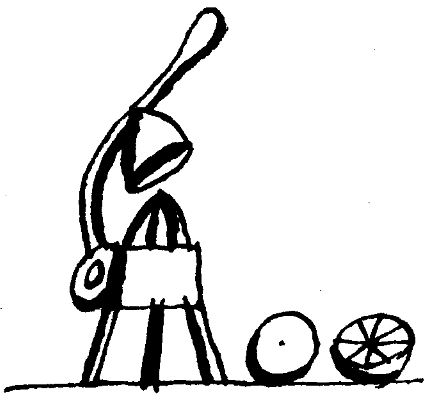
Labour Party leadership was prepared to make a stand against the appointment of a conservative to the Presidency of the High Court.

IN late October, Labour suddenly found itself in possession of extraordinary new ammunition against Attorney General Whelehan and his staff. It was learned that in late 1993 the authorities in Northern Ireland had sought the extradition from the Republic of a priest, Father Brendan Smyth, who had been accused of pedophilia, and that the Attorney General's office in Dublin had failed to act. The priest had returned to Northern Ireland of his own accord in June, and had pleaded guilty and been sentenced to four years in prison. It turned out that Father Smyth had been abusing children for nearly thirty years. Although there was a dim appreciation of the revelations in North America about priests and sexual abuse, we somehow convinced ourselves that it couldn't happen here. The idea that priests could take advantage of children was beyond belief, right up to the prosecution of Father Smyth.

One family whose children Father Smyth had victimized had complained not just to Father Smyth's religious order but to Bishop Cahal Daly (he is now Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All-Ireland, and a cardinal), and Daly had replied that he had already discussed the matter with Father Smyth's superiors and would continue to monitor developments. The priest's superiors responded by relocating him and assigning him other duties. No one thought of calling the police, because the Church in Ireland existed like the medieval Church, autonomous, answerable to nobody. The idea of a policeman arresting a priest would have been outrageous: priests lived and reigned outside the civil law. Almost all the statements Church authorities made about allegations of sexual abuse seemed to be based on this assumption. Bishop Daly said that the Church would, of course, coöperate with the civil power in such cases after conducting its own investigations. Again and again, senior figures in the Church admitted in puzzled tones that they had mishandled the controversy, as though it had been merely a matter of poor public relations or bad planning.

Not only had Father Smyth's extradition file lain untouched in the Attorney General's office for seven months but representatives of the Church had pressured the Belfast family that had originally made the criminal complaint to withdraw it and let the Church handle the matter. The Labour Party sought an explanation, and reiterated its opposition to the appointment of Whelehan to the Presidency of the High Court. On Friday, November 11th, the Labour ministers rose and walked out of the Cabinet room after Albert Reynolds accepted the Attorney General's explanation that the only reason for delay in dealing with the extradition case was its complexity. Later that day, Reynolds went ahead and appointed Whelehan to the High Court. He seemed incapable of understanding the depth of feeling the issue had aroused. Suddenly, Labour looked like the party that protected abused children and opposed the absolute power of the Church, and Reynolds' position as the man who delivered peace to Northern Ireland meant nothing.

During the weekend, as Catholics all over Ireland began to absorb the ramifications of the Father Smyth case, a priest was found dead of a heart attack in a gay sauna in Dublin, and the incident was widely reported. By chance, there were two other Catholic priests in the sauna at the same time, and they were able to give him the last rites. Just two days later, on November 14th, a priest who had sexually assaulted an eighteen-year-old boy hitchhiker was sentenced. If you watched the nine-o'clock news that evening, you saw a segment on the convicted priest, as well as interviews with several parishioners of the priest who died at the sauna, and a report on the political fallout from the delay in the extradition of Father Smyth. Two years after the revelations about Bishop Casey, amid fresh scandals and a political crisis, it was hard not to believe that the power of the Church in Ireland had been broken.



IN the week after Reynolds appointed Harry Whelehan to the High Court, the main opposition party, Fine Gael, led by John Bruton, introduced in Parliament a no-confidence motion against the government. Irish television broadcast the debate live throughout that afternoon and evening. On Tuesday, November 15th, Reynolds defended his appointment of Whelehan, but privately, it turned out, he was trying to force Whelehan to resign. On Wednesday evening, during prime time, he told Parliament that he was now convinced he had been misled by the former Attorney General in his account of the extradition delay, and that he regretted appointing him to the High Court. Dick Spring, the leader of the Labour Party, announced that he had discovered that Reynolds himself had withheld information from Parliament about the Father Smyth case. He was no longer willing to share power, he went on, and Reynolds would have to go. By early December, Labour was ready to form a government without Fianna Fáil.

These weeks in late November and early December were crucial ones in the life of a new independent and liberal Ireland. The Labour Party formed a government with Fine Gael and the Democratic Left, a small party, and John Bruton became Prime Minister on December 15th. Bruton, forty-seven, has no time for dreamy rhetoric or old-fashioned conservatism. He has never made speeches in support of a united Ireland, and he is known to be sympathetic to the Unionists in Northern Ireland.

Yet he has followed Albert Reynolds' line on the possibility of a settlement in Northern Ireland, negotiating with the British on behalf of the Catholic nationalists. Last month, when he and British Prime Minister Major presented the Framework Document—the new proposals for the future of Northern Ireland produced by the British and Irish governments—both men seemed strikingly gray and passionless. There were no great flourishes or revelations, only a sense of controlled and careful work toward progress. It was hard to imagine that Ireland and England had ever been at war. More recently, in a speech in Washington on the eve of St. Patrick's Day, Bruton was careful to praise John Major's involvement in the peace process, while also praising Gerry Adams.

Bruton understands better than Reynolds did how to juggle political and social issues. On the morning of February 23rd, the day after the publication of the Framework Document, his Minister for Health, Michael Noonan, held a press conference to announce proposed new abortion legislation—legislation that pleased neither the pro-life nor the pro-choice movements. Doctors and counsellors will now be allowed to give women the phone numbers and addresses of abortion clinics in England but will be prohibited from making appointments for them or giving them letters of referral. The announcement seemed timed to take advantage of the public's preoccupation with the news concerning Northern Ireland, but abortion, like divorce, still has the potential to divide the country and dominate public debate. (The legislation was passed, but President Mary Robinson recently declined to sign the new law, and referred it to the Supreme Court to test its constitutionality.) We were promised a divorce referendum in the early summer, but this has now been postponed until the autumn. The bishops will have some influence on the result, but, ironically, the main factor that may still prevail against the legalization of divorce is fear of change in the laws governing inheritance and property rights.

As social mores have relaxed, the Church has begun to focus on retaining its control of education. Most schools in the Republic are owned and run by the Church, and largely paid for by the state. In most parishes, the priest is the principal of the school for children under the age of twelve or thirteen. He heads the board that appoints the teachers, who are invariably practicing Catholics. Preparation for First Communion, First Confession, and Confirmation is done in school rather than in church.

In many parts of the country, however, a decline in religious vocations has meant that there are not enough religious principals to go around, and lay principals have had to be appointed. The Church has made no mistakes. Many of the new lay principals are conservative Catholics, as anxious as any religious order, if not more so, to pass on a Catholic education to the next generation. They are also prepared to be more authoritarian than their religious colleagues. One lay principal, at a school where a friend of mine was sending her children, told the parents that her first aim was to instill in the students a love of Jesus. The parents were rather more interested in what the school was doing to help the children pass exams.

There have been times when it was easy to believe that the whole system had been undermined, and that the Church in Ireland would become like the Church on the European mainland—remote from the state, and used only for essential ceremonies, except by the elderly and the most conservative. But even now it is possible to take the view that all these scandals, and the state's resistance to the Church's teaching, have been smoke screens—ways of distracting us from what is really going on. All you have to do is go into a Catholic church anywhere in Ireland for, say, seven-o'clock Mass on any Saturday evening. The churches are full, and people young and old are locked in concentrated prayer. Because the responses are made out loud, there is a genuine atmosphere of community and shared belief. There are long lines for Communion. It would be easy to view this as an image of a timeless Ireland, a country whose religious sensibility froze in the fifties, and where things don't change but merely slip backward and forward. Yet I like to think that there is a new awareness among most Catholics in Ireland that their faith is all the more precious and secure for being private, that it no longer needs to reach out into the public world and control legislation and state policy.

So we watch every move, study every opinion poll, and try to decipher and decode each scandal and each sea change. Will divorce get through? Will the country face up to the hypocrisy of the ban on abortion? Certain things are clear. For one, the Church in Ireland has softened, and it is easier to live here now. This time, it is genuinely possible that what we have been witnessing in Ireland is real—a real shift in attitude, toward a stronger and more liberal democracy. ♦

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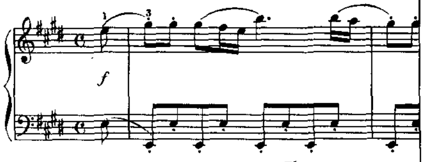

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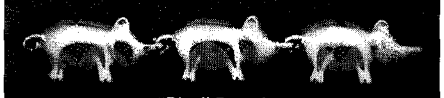

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STATES OF MIND

THE DEVIL PROBLEM

Elaine Pagels won popular and scholarly acclaim for her revolutionary interpretation of the early Christian Church in "The Gnostic Gospels." Then unthinkable personal tragedy led her to the subject of a new book: What is Satan?

BY DAVID REMNICK

SIXTEEN years ago, Elaine Pagels, who was then a professor in her mid-thirties at Barnard College, shattered the myth that early Christianity was a unified movement and faith. It is a rarity for a scholar so young to alter even slightly the historical view of something as vast and essential as the Western world's dominant religion. Ordinarily, only the physicist or the mathematician can hope to enter early middle age having made a scholarly mark; indeed, for such a scientist a glide into the thirties without distinction can be cause for despair—or a job in university administration. The historian, by contrast, cannot rely on intuition or mental speed. History is an art not only of imagination but also of accumulation—of languages, reading, travel, perspective. Pagels, who is now the Harrington Spear Paine Professor of Religion at Princeton, had accumulated thousands of hours in the library, the classroom, and the archives, and a working command of Greek, Latin, German, Hebrew, French, Italian, and Coptic as well—an appropriately full quiver for a specialist in early Christianity. She had also, at this preposterously early point in her career, hit the academic bull's-eye. In 1979, Pagels published "The Gnostic Gospels," a brief and elegant analysis of a series of ancient documents known collectively as the Nag Hammadi Library. Just as Edmund Wilson illuminated for a wide audience the importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Pagels explained the value and meaning of a trove of manuscripts unearthed in 1945 in the upper-Egyptian desert by a peasant named Muhammad Ali al-Samman. While digging near the village of Nag Hammadi for *sabakh*, a soft soil used as fertilizer, Muhammad Ali found a red earthenware jar. Thinking there might be gold inside, he smashed the jar with his mattock, and found instead thirteen papyrus books bound in leather. That night, his mother burned much of the find in the oven as kindling. What she did not burn ended up in the hands of black marketeers, antiquities dealers, and, eventually, scholars of first- and second-century Christianity.

Through a careful reading of the fifty-two sacred texts that survived—they are Coptic translations of Greek originals, some as old as the four Gospels—Pagels made it clear that early Christianity was far more complicated than anyone had ever imagined. A wildly diverse compendium of poems, chants, myths, gospels, pagan documents, and spiritual instructions, the texts are distinct evidence of fierce theological debate and of an alternative tradition within early Christianity—a kind of mystical variant, much like the Zen tradition in Buddhism, Kabbalah in Judaism, Sufism in Islam. What was more, Pagels argued, the early Church Fathers, in their attempt to eliminate this more experiential Christianity in favor of building an orthodox institution—a universal, or catholic, church—declared the texts to be heretical. The Gnostics may well have buried the texts to avoid brutal purges being led by the notorious Bishop of Alexandria, Athanasius, in the year 367. Although many of the stories in what became the New Testament—the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection of Christ—are at least as strange as anything in the Gnostic texts, the Church leaders canonized the Gospels attributed to Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John as a reliable basis for a social organization with mass appeal. Gnosticism, with its emphasis on individual divinity and unmediated personal communion, was a threat to the authority of bishops and priests. Its suggestion, for instance, that the Resurrection of Jesus was a mythological vision, rather than, as the Synoptic Gospels assert, a historical event, was intolerable, and so was the Gnostic notion that God was both father and mother of Jesus. Thus, in the second century an orthodoxy began to take shape—and, with it, a temperament. Irenaeus, the orthodox Bishop of Lyons and one of the leading crusaders against the Gnostics, declared that, while certain heretics "boast that they possess more gospels than there really are," no Church leader may, "however highly gifted he may be in matters of eloquence, teach doctrines different from these."

"The Gnostic Gospels" won the National Book Award, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and the praise of Pagels' professional colleagues. Harold Bloom, a literary critic with a minor in Gnosticism, credited Pagels (in the Washington *Post*) with "devoted and sound scholarship"; reviewers remarked on her skills as an artful, concise explainer. She had, remarkably, delivered a complicated argument to a popular audience without cheating the demands of scholarship.

In the years that followed the success of "The Gnostic Gospels," Elaine Pagels seemed to lead a life of invariable good fortune. Her professional future was limitless, her personal life a source of pleasure and vitality. Her marriage, to the physicist Heinz Pagels, was a match of intellect and spirit. Heinz Pagels was a research scientist, a writer, the executive director of the New York Academy of Sciences, a human-rights activist, and a famously charming raconteur. "In a way, they were a perfect couple," Elizabeth Diggs, a playwright and one of Elaine's closest friends, recalls. "Heinz was tall, blond, fabulously good-looking. He was brilliant, and he was good. He had flaws—he could be a name-dropper—but he was a good, deeply moral man. Heinz had more passion and love of the world than almost anyone else I've ever known. He was a perfect foil to Elaine. He adored Elaine and completely supported her. He more than supported her—he championed her."

In 1980, Elaine gave birth to a son, Mark. When Mark was two, he was diagnosed with a respiratory ailment that would inevitably shorten his life; this knowledge haunted the family, yet they lived a nearly ideal existence. Elaine began work on a study of the Adam-and-Eve story and the way Augustine of Hippo had reinterpreted it in the fourth century as a parable of inherent sinfulness rather than of human freedom. Heinz became increasingly involved in writing popular books about physics and in studying the emerging field of complexity theory. Mark grew up a radiant and preternaturally intelligent little boy, who went everywhere in New York with his parents (often on Heinz's shoulders): to the Hayden Planetarium and the Museum of Natural History, to the ships docked along the Hudson, to the galleries in the East Village. In 1986, Elaine and Heinz adopted a second child, a girl named Sarah.

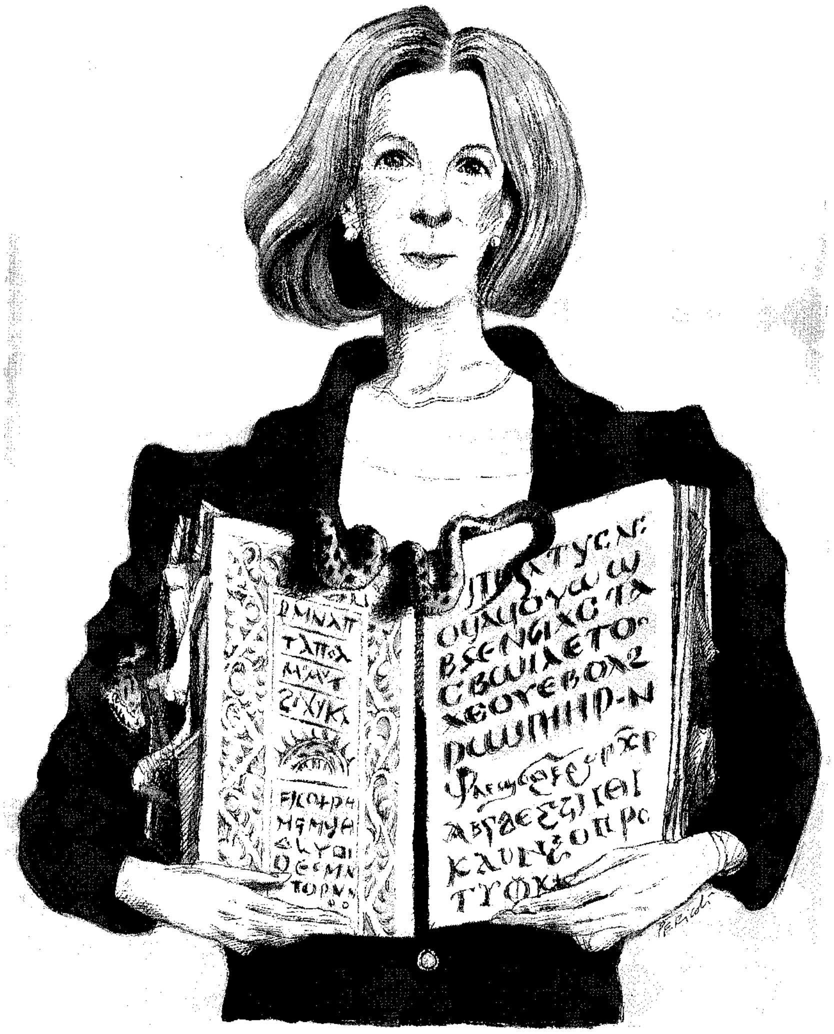
On April 10, 1987, Mark Pagels died, at the age of six and a half. As he got older, his lungs had failed to grow properly and had lost their elasticity. By the time Elaine finished the manuscript of "Adam, Eve, and the Serpent" and Heinz finished his study of complexity theory, "The Dreams of Reason," they found themselves dedicating their books to the memory of their son. Friends remember coming out of the funeral service, at the Church of the Heavenly Rest, on Fifth Avenue, and seeing men and women weeping openly as they went down the steps. "I've been to God knows how many funerals and yet this one seemed to break everyone's heart," one friend said.

For the next year, Elaine and Heinz plunged into an unthinkable grief, an ache worthy of Job. "Raw absence, sadness, dumb grief," Elaine called it later. But they refused to succumb to despair. They still had their daughter, Sarah, and after about a year had passed they adopted a son—David. Heinz, especially, provided a spirit and a perspective that helped move the family forward. In "The Cosmic Code," a study of modern physics, published in 1982, he concluded with a joyful meditation on the pleasure of understanding, even in the face of death, some of the structures and the logic of the universe:

> I used to climb mountains in snow and ice, hanging onto the sides of great rocks. I was describing one of my adventures to an older friend once, and when I had finished he asked me, "Why do you want to kill yourself?" I protested. I told him that the rewards I wanted were of sight, of pleasure, of the thrill of pitting my body and my skills against nature. My friend replied, "When you are as old as I am you will see that you are trying to kill yourself."
>
> I often dream about falling. Such dreams are commonplace to the ambitious or those who climb mountains. Lately I dreamed I was clutching at the face of a rock but it would not hold. Gravel gave way. I grasped for a shrub, but it pulled loose, and in cold terror I fell into the abyss. Suddenly I realized that my fall was relative; there was no bottom and no end. A feeling of pleasure overcame me. I realized that what I embody, the principle of life, cannot be destroyed. It is written into the cosmic code, the order of the universe. As I continued to fall in the dark void, embraced by the vault of the heavens, I sang to the beauty of the stars and made my peace with the darkness.

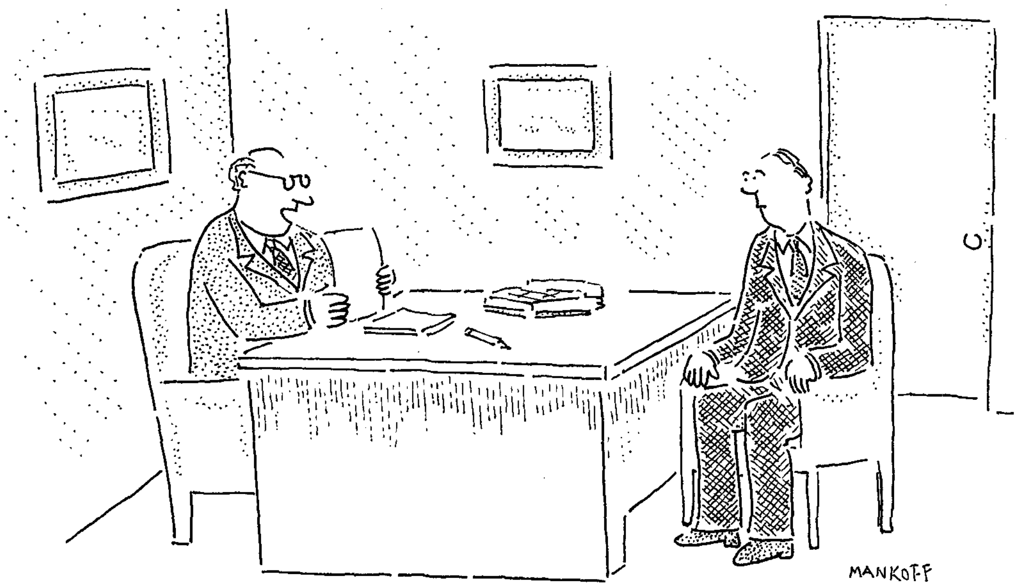
By the beginning of the summer of 1988, friends began to think that Heinz and Elaine were starting to emerge from the shock of their first child's death. That June, the family went to Aspen, where Heinz could work at the Center for Physics, Elaine could read, and they and the children could relax together. Seth Lloyd, a young physicist who was working with Heinz on complexity theory, recalled that the summer started out with an aura of promise. "Elaine and Heinz were really looking happy," he said. "It seemed as if they'd finally made it to the other side."

In Aspen, Heinz and, sometimes,



According to Pagels, the Gospel writers' creation of Satan gave rise to the moral history of the West. "This material is painful," she says.

TULLIO PERICOLI



"I gotta tell ya, these embezzlement convictions raise a red flag."

• •

Elaine took long hikes in the hills and the mountains. On the morning of July 24th, Heinz and Seth went for a long trek up Pyramid Peak, a fourteen-thousand-foot mountain in the Elk Range, outside the town. Elaine stayed behind. Seth was an experienced climber, but he had never been up Pyramid Peak. Heinz had, and he took the lead. "The only reason there is any danger on Pyramid Peak is that there is the danger of crumbling, falling rock," Lloyd said. "Otherwise, it's really more of a hike than a climb. It's only in the last thousand feet that you have to use your hands. At around midday, we made it to the top and hung around there for about an hour. It was a nice day, with long, clear views. We ate our lunch. Then we started down."

As a child, Heinz had suffered from polio. The condition left him with weakened ankles, but outward signs of that weakness were slight. Once in a while, climbing or just walking down the street, he would stumble, but not very often. He wore ordinary hiking boots on the climb up Pyramid Peak. "We'd come down a half mile, maybe four hundred vertical feet from the top, and then we came to a tricky bit on a ledge with a deep drop below," Lloyd went on. "Heinz was in front. At the end of the ledge, there's a spot where you have to hop onto a saddle, a little ridge. It's a hop of a couple of feet—nothing that a kid couldn't do, really—but Heinz had those weak ankles, and as he landed on the ledge his ankle gave out. He slipped and he fell. That's all it was—a slip. Heinz slid down a kind of rock chute into a narrow ravine and out of sight. He was trying to save himself, but there was nothing for him to grab onto." Three hours after the fall, a mountain-rescue team found Heinz Pagels' body two thousand feet below the point of his fall. He was forty-nine years old.

IN June, Elaine Pagels will publish a new book, "The Origin of Satan." Characteristically brief and lucid, it is an attempt to describe the evolving shape of the Devil in the sacred Judeo-Christian literature and the rise of demonization, a practice that has haunted two thousand years of history. For Pagels, demonization is a crucial and terrifying component of Christianity. What began as a minority sect's rhetorical strategy, a way of defining and asserting itself, became a majority religion's moral, and even psychological, justification for persecution: first of Jews, then of Romans and of heretics—of all opponents, real or imagined.

Pagels, like many other scholars, begins with the observation that, although all kinds of angels frequent the Hebrew Bible, demonic beings are nearly absent; there are agents of obstruction in the Book of Job and in Numbers, for example, but they are still members of the heavenly court. This changes with the rise of sectarianism. To two first-century Jewish sects—the Essenes (who died out and became a historical curiosity) and the followers of Jesus (who flourished)—figures called, variously, Satan or Belial or Beelzebub, who would shatter the unity of the heavenly court, appear as the great Other in a cosmic war. Pagels outlines the way the four Gospel writers, who probably wrote between the years 60 and 70, just after the Roman destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jewish people, shaped their stories and imagery to unify the Jewish followers of Jesus. The typology of God and Satan, Us and Them, appears. Although the Gospels tell a story of the moral genius of Jesus—his lessons of charity, redemption, and love—they also tell a parallel story in which the enemies of Jesus threaten tribal unity on earth and are, moreover, incarnations of Satan. This second story, in which the Gospel writers create a psychology of cosmic war, has influenced the course—the tragic course—of Western history.

Pagels begins with the details of the text to chart the appearance of Satan. The Gospel of Mark, for example, deviates from Jewish tradition and describes (3:23-27) the ministry of Jesus in constant battle with the "kingdom" of Satan. For the Gospel writers, the first enemy was "the intimate enemy"—the majority of their fellow-Jews, who did not follow Christ. The creation of such a powerful Satan in the orthodox Christian cosmology becomes not only a foundation for anti-Semitism but also a pattern of viewing the world. "Such visions have been incorporated into Christian tradition and have served, among other things, to confirm for Christians their own identification with God and to demonize their opponents—first other Jews, then pagans, and later dissident Christians called heretics," Pagels writes. This apocalyptic vision, in which victory is assured to those who stand on the side of Christ, "has taught even secular-minded people to interpret the history of Western culture as a moral history in which the forces of good contend against the forces of evil in the world." Demonization is crucial to the language and thinking of fundamentalists, from Pat Robertson to the ayatollahs; during the Gulf

War, it was present in the rhetoric of both Saddam Hussein and George Bush. Demonization is also present even in secular fundamentalisms: Lenin's rhetoric, his prediction of a global victory over the capitalist infidels, borrows from the religious tradition he promised to bury.

Curiously, "The Origin of Satan" begins with a nakedly personal moment, a hint of the way Pagels transformed pain into scholarship: "In 1988, when my husband of twenty years died in a hiking accident, I became aware that, like many people who grieve, I was living in the presence of an invisible being—living, that is, with a vivid sense of someone who had died." It is a tantalizing moment, but, just as quickly as Pagels opens the curtain on her creative process in "The Origin of Satan," she rings it shut.

When I first met Pagels, she reminded me of a caricature Einstein—the dreamy academic heading down Nassau Street, his keys falling out of one pocket, a pen leaking in the other. Pagels, too, presents a deceptively absent-minded face to the world. Because she is forever rushing from one commitment to another, she is often late, forgetting things, dropping things, a little helpless. Her acquaintance with the world of the ordinary seems, at times, unsure. When we travelled together from Princeton to Harvard, train schedules and airport gates seemed to baffle her. In a retro sort of way, she invites help. You can't resist carrying her bag, or checking her forehead to see if she has a fever. And yet she is enormously strong. Pagels not only survived two tragedies in the space of fifteen months but since then has written another book, reared her children, taught her many students. She is, by all reports, a good colleague, a devoted friend. Her mind is quick and generous. At fifty-two, she has a mild, earnest appearance (a rounded, friendly face, windblown blond hair), and yet in conversation she is absolutely fierce, focussed, picking apart the careless question, delighted by the unexpected one. When she delivers her lectures for an undergraduate course on the New Testament—Monday and Wednesday mornings at ten—she does not so much pace the room as prowl it. Pagels radiates so much intensity that you somehow imagine a fast-burning cigarette in her hand. There is none. She does not smoke. She smolders.

"At one point in my life, I had to make a decision," Pagels told me one day as I raced after her, past a "Don't Walk" sign and into the street. (We narrowly missed being hit by a maroon minivan doing about thirty miles an hour.) "I had to decide whether to have too little or too much in my life," she went on. "Study, children, friends, travel—all of it. That was an easy one. I chose too much."

After reading the manuscript of "The Origin of Satan," I asked her how the death of her husband and her child could possibly have led her to a study of the Devil.

"The tragedy—the *tragedies*—were absolutely devastating, unimaginable," she began. Her voice was even, deliberate. "You're just beginning to think you can get through one tragedy and start again and then this hits—Heinz's death. David was three months old and Sarah was two and a half when Heinz died. The thought of raising these children without him was inconceivable. But the question was: Can you get through? I found that in times of grief the church has little to say. It's just too remote. The meditation techniques I'd learned from Trappist monks in Colorado were more useful. But just to imagine doing anything was so hard. I withdrew from teaching and went for a year to the Institute for Advanced Study. Mostly, I spent time with my children and my friends, reading, listening to music."

After a brief pause, she went on, "When two things like that happen, you wonder, How can I cope? You wonder, What ever happened to a sense of proportion in the universe? But the universe, of course, is not about that. Heinz had a sense of all this. His work was all about chaos—chaos theory. But in me—even in me, who was raised by a nonbeliever—there was a subliminal perception of a morally ordered universe. Look at the story of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Hebrew Bible. It is a story about how a feature of the natural universe, a volcano, destroyed two towns. The writer tries to describe how every one of the men in these towns was evil and therefore they were all destroyed

407
Shanahan

"Hi, honey—I'm home."

by this volcano. But in fact erupting is simply what volcanoes do. They erupt, regardless of whether anyone in their path is good or evil. So I began to think about these stories and these questions, and move myself out of a position of subliminally accepting a position in which a moral order is so present. I began to see and become aware of the extent to which I perceive things through this idea of a universe of good and evil. It didn't matter that I was not a believer in the traditional sense. These stories, whether you believe them literally or not, are shadow images, the mental architecture we live in, and they are pervasive.

"The kind of response that most of us would have to such an event would be as though the event itself were part of a morally ordered universe, as if God had planned it to punish someone. This to me seemed impossible and strange. Nevertheless, it is a pattern that works on you psychologically. The impulse is to ask, Why me? It just couldn't be meaningless, any more than the birth of a wonderful child could be meaningless. I began thinking of how the Greeks and the Romans thought about the forces of nature as powerful forces that were benign or malevolent. They either graced your life or destroyed it, but it was not a matter of intention. Zeus and Apollo and all the rest affected your life, but without thinking about it, without intending to."

After the deaths of Mark and Heinz, Pagels said, she wondered how people dealt with catastrophe, where they focussed their anger. "For people more religious—well, some might get angry at God, but that made no sense to me," she said. "In the ancient Church, they got mad at Satan. That seemed to make more sense. And so I had to ask, What is Satan? What's the Devil?"

ELAINE HIESEY PAGELS grew up in a world in which the idea of such questions—or of studying the history of religion as an academic discipline—was faintly comic. Her father, a professor of biology at Stanford, was Protestant but almost aggressively nonobservant. He considered religion obsolete. In his view, there had been in human history a line of progress from magic to religion and on to science. Partly out of curiosity, partly out of a teen-ager's search for the precise way to drive her parents crazy, Elaine began going to a local evangelical church when she was thirteen. She succeeded in her rebellion, but stopped going to church a couple of years later, when she decided that the stories and the instructions of the Bible were being understood too literally. Her ambivalence, which persists, is the familiar modern one: a constant wavering between spiritual need or interest and the unwillingness to heed the orthodoxies of any church. Even now, when Pagels is asked whether she is a believer she will answer "Not exactly" or "Not in the sense that believers mean it," or something of the kind. She is deeply attracted to religious ritual: she has visited a Zen center in San Francisco, watched Hopi snake-dancing rituals in the Southwest. (Nowadays, she even goes regularly to an Episcopal church, "though at first it ran counter to my self-image.") After long thought, she decided, upon graduating from Stanford, to apply for graduate study in religion at Harvard.

"At that time, in the sixties, religion was not considered a fit subject for study by most of my peers," Pagels said when we met at her office in Princeton one afternoon. "Even Heinz, when I got to know him, thought it was a little strange. But I was determined. When I applied to Harvard, they said, 'Wait a year. We've had bad luck with women students. They always quit and get married.' But I wanted to go, so I got my master's degree in Greek in the meantime and then entered the doctoral program in religion at Harvard in 1965. My parents, needless to say, thought this was all a little strange."

Pagels is interested in a range of subjects—poetry, music, modern dance—so I asked her if she had decided to study religion as part of a spiritual quest or as an academic pursuit.

"Well, both, really," she said. "For so many people like me, who are put off by the shape the modern church can take, there is the idea that if you go back to the early Christian Church you'll find some pure golden age, some clear and much simpler version of what later became more complex and amplified. Christians look around the world today and they see Christian Scientists, Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Southern Baptists, Methodists, right-wing Presbyterians, Pentecostalists—and they say that this is a tremendous cacophony of voices, an impossible situation. When I went to graduate school with that rather naïve idea, one of my teachers—Krister Stendahl, a former Lutheran bishop—asked me, 'Why have you come?' I said something about finding the essence of Christianity. And he looked at me in a very penetrating way and said, 'How do you know it has an essence?' Then I knew why I had come to graduate school—to be asked that kind of question. But I was looking for some phenomenon that would account for both my fascination with Christianity and my disaffection with its various institutional forms. I thought that it would be way back in the beginning, something pure in its divine revelation. What I found, first of all, is that one cannot get back to that revelation in any form we would agree is pure. In just a generation after Jesus of Nazareth, there are all kinds of refractions, and even more later than that. Not only that but there were refractions and differences in the Gospels themselves. It was a much more complicated picture than I had ever imagined."

Nothing proved to Pagels the complications of early Christianity more decisively than her first encounters with the Gnostic manuscripts. Gnosticism was not by any means unknown in scholarly circles: early Christian orthodox thinkers wrote extensively about Gnosticism, mostly by way of debunking it; writers as diverse as Gibbon, Blake, Melville, and Jung were aware of Gnosticism and interested in it; between the World Wars, the German-born scholar Hans Jonas (among others) wrote about the sources of Gnosticism. But when the Nag Hammadi manuscripts were discovered, in 1945, the concrete proof of Christianity's complications, its diverse forms in those first generations after Christ, became inarguable.

As had been the case with the Dead Sea Scrolls, study of the Nag Hammadi Library languished for years because of confusion, bureaucracy, and academic turf battles. For several years after Mu-

APRIL IN THE VILLAGE

It is so quiet in the afternoon;
you breathe or pause, and something
presses against your chest.

I read. On the bed
beside me two women
make love.

There are thin round
crates of lemons.
Past the window
a man is hauling
open boxes of lettuce and plums.

On the bed, someone cries
and is sucked out
of the breast.

A square of yard
is being swept.
The grasses begin to go out
around the lamppost.

—SAMN STOCKWELL

d an international team of a
cholars which, under Robin-
on, issued an English edition
scripts—"The Nag Ham-
y"—in 1977.
y," she said. "I remember
t novel by Irving Wallace,
' It's about someone finding
oel. At the end, it turns out
hing trivial—some sort of
uism, totally boring and dis-
. But when you open the
homas, which was hidden
centuries, it's not trivial at
Jesus speaking cryptically, as
n. In the Gospel of Thom-
ne of my favorite passages—
If you bring forth what is
what you bring forth will
ou do not bring forth what is
what you do not bring forth
you.' " Many of the Gnostic
ought to have been written
ne canonical Gospels. Ac-
elmut Koester, however, it is
that the Gospel of Thomas,
nay have been written some-
en the years 50 and 100—
y as, or earlier than, the Gos-
, Matthew, John, and Luke.
degree, Pagels' title, "The
spels," is too loose. Not all
the Nag Hammadi papers are Gnostic in origin, and not all are, strictly speaking, gospels. The variety of the texts makes a synthetic analysis quite difficult. But there are texts, such as the Testimony of Truth, that are clearly rivals to the canonical Biblical literature. In the Testimony of Truth, for example, the Garden of Eden story is told through the eyes of the serpent—a symbol, in Gnostic literature, of divine wisdom. In this version, the Lord threatens Adam and Eve, while the serpent prods them toward eating the fruit of knowledge. Perhaps the most important feature of the text is that it denies the actuality of the Passion of Christ and attacks the canonical enthusiasm for martyrdom. (In fact, several of the Nag Hammadi texts—the Apocalypse of Peter, the Second Treatise of the Great Seth, the Treatise on the Resurrection—tell the Passion story in far different ways, which suggest that Jesus was not an ordinary human being and that his suffering is not a model for emulation.) The Testimony of Truth mocks "empty" martyrs for their delusions of redemption and mocks thinkers such as Ignatius and Tertullian for welcoming martyrs as an offering to God; such a God, the text says, would be a cannibal.

And yet the orthodox vision of martyrdom, and of Christ as human, prevailed. Why? Pagels writes that the orthodox emphasis on martyrdom was essential to the building of the Church institution in the second century. Church leaders like Ignatius wrote letters about martyrdom to various Church groups at a time of terrible persecution of Christians, for distributing accounts of martyrdom was a way of warning others, closing ranks, and lifting spirits. The Gnostic vision of Jesus as a purely spiritual being, in this case, could serve no such purpose. The Church Fathers were rightly convinced that ordinary human suffering is better validated through the orthodox Christian version of the Jesus story: an ordinary man martyred by his enemies.

Another text that fascinated Pagels was "Thunder: Perfect Mind," a mystical poem spoken in the voice of a female divine:

For I am the first and the last.
I am the honored one and the scorned one.
I am the whore and the holy one.
I am the wife and the virgin. . . .
I am the barren one, and many are her sons. . . .
I am the silence that is incomprehensible. . . .
I am the utterance of my name.

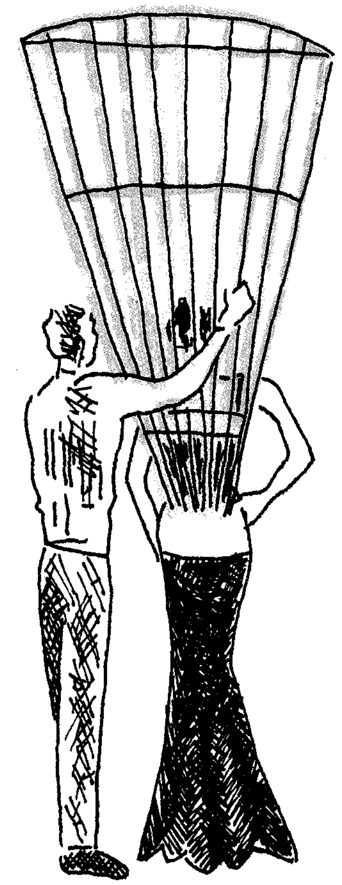
Pagels suggests that this passage represents a tendency in the Gnostic literature to provide for a female aspect in the representations of God. In the Gospel of Philip, the birth of Jesus derives from the the unity of the Father of All, a masculine divinity, and the Holy Spirit, a distinctly feminine presence. The text mocks the orthodox notion of Mary's conception of Jesus independent of Joseph: "They do not know what they are saying."

The early-Christian movement showed great openness toward women—Jesus himself flouted Jewish tradition by talking freely with women; women sometimes acted as prophets, apostles, and teachers—and the Gnostics generally affirm that tradition in their texts. But orthodox Christians struck back—and decisively. Once more, Pagels says that the reason for the orthodox victory was as much political as theological. The Church leaders simply would not tolerate what they saw as a feminine interest in Gnostic literature or a position in the Church hierarchy. Tertullian, a great enemy of Gnostics, was outraged at the idea of women flocking to heretical sects. "These heretical women—how audacious they are!" he wrote. "They have no modesty; they are bold enough to teach, to engage in argument, to enact exor-

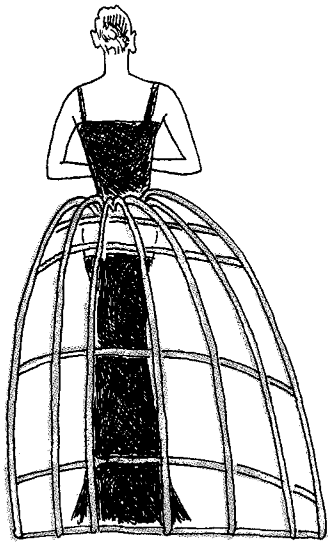
SKETCHBOOK · BY MICHAEL ROBERTS

GALLIANO GETS READY

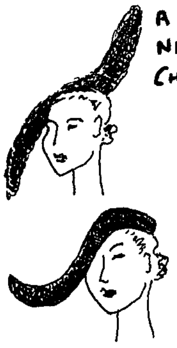
How the designer prepared his Paris fall show.



A CAGE OF PLASTIC RODS IS CONSTRUCTED TO SUPPORT THE BACK OF AN UNUSUALLY LONG EVENING COAT.

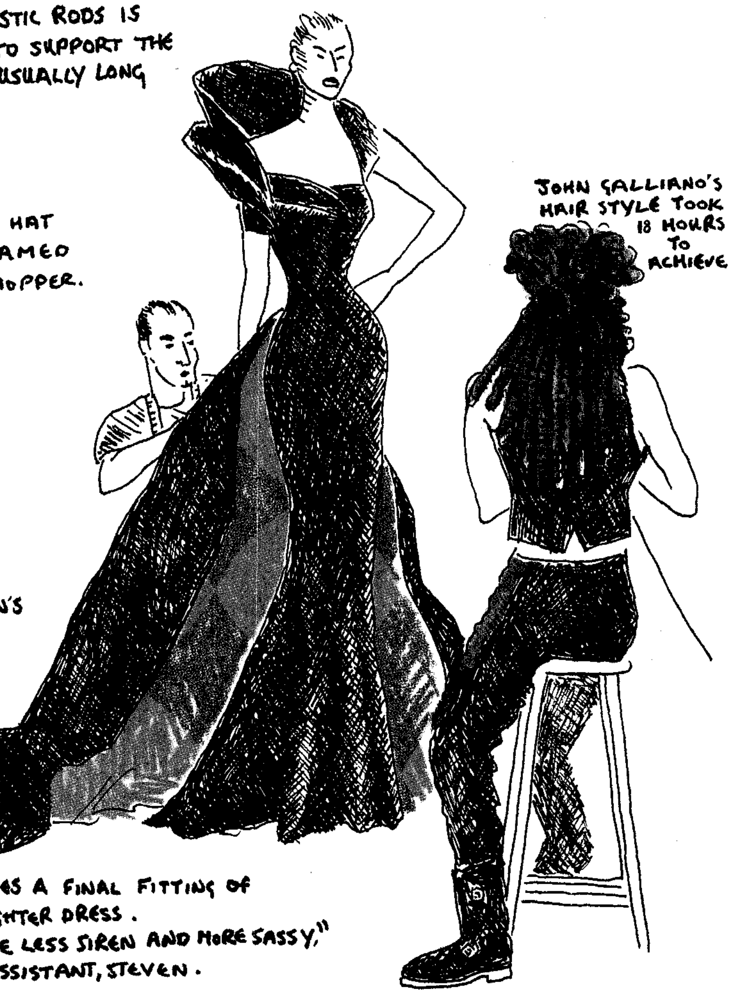


THE PERFECTED CAGE, PAINTED AND LEFT OUTSIDE TO DRY, IS REMOVED BY SOMEONE WHO MAY HAVE THOUGHT IT WAS RUBBISH.



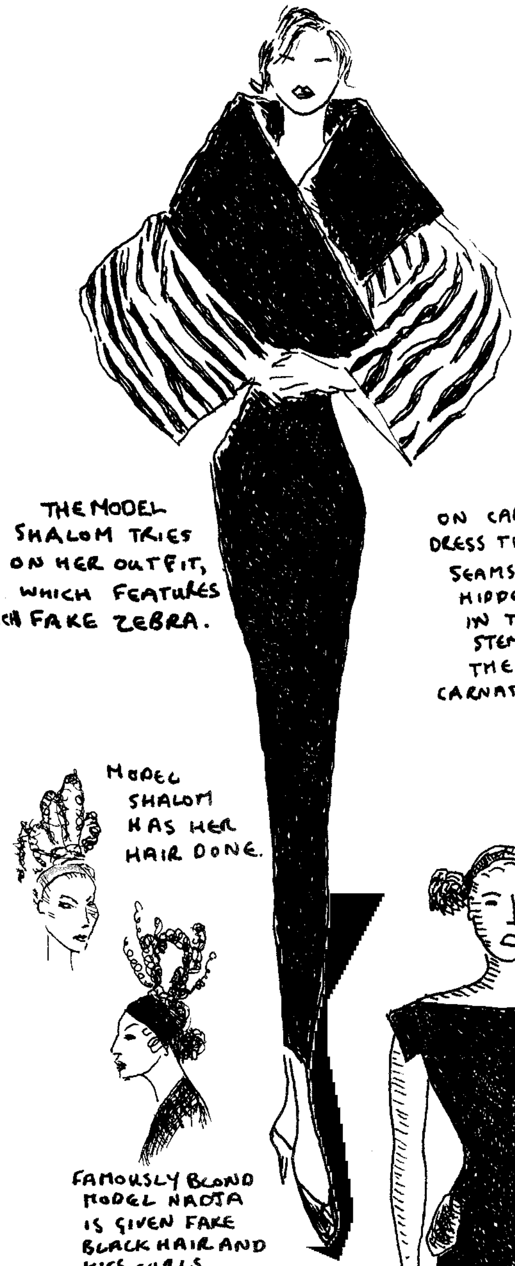
A HAT NAMED CHOPPER.

THIS ONE IS CALLED SATAN'S TONGUE.



JOHN GALLIANO'S HAIR STYLE TOOK 18 HOURS TO ACHIEVE.

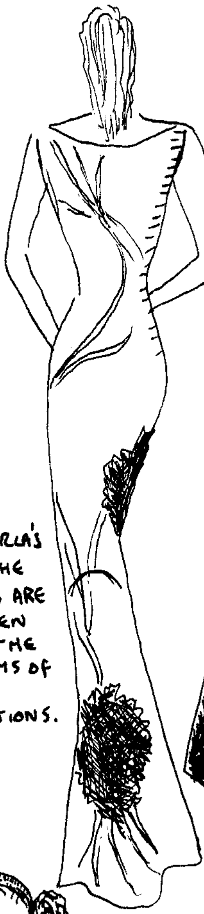
JOHN OVERSEES A FINAL FITTING OF THE BULLFIGHTER DRESS.
"IT SHOULD BE LESS SIREN AND MORE SASSY," OPINES HIS ASSISTANT, STEVEN.



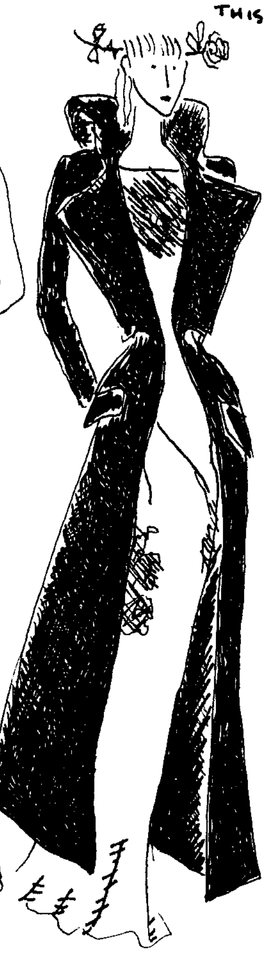
THE MODEL SHALOM TRIES ON HER OUTFIT, WHICH FEATURES MUCH FAKE ZEBRA.

MODEL SHALOM HAS HER HAIR DONE.

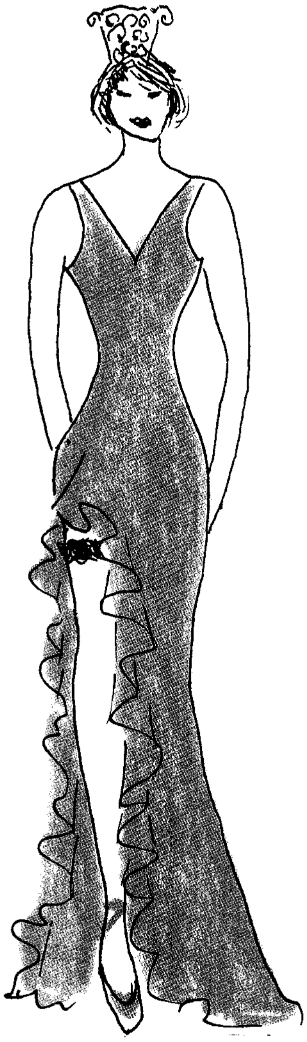
FAMOUSLY BLOND MODEL NADJA IS GIVEN FAKE BLACK HAIR AND KISS CURLS.



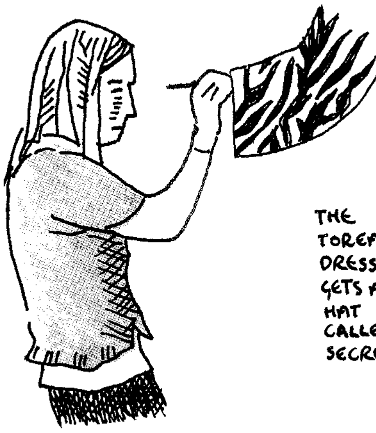
ON CARLA'S DRESS THE SEAMS ARE HIDDEN IN THE STEMS OF THE CARNATIONS.



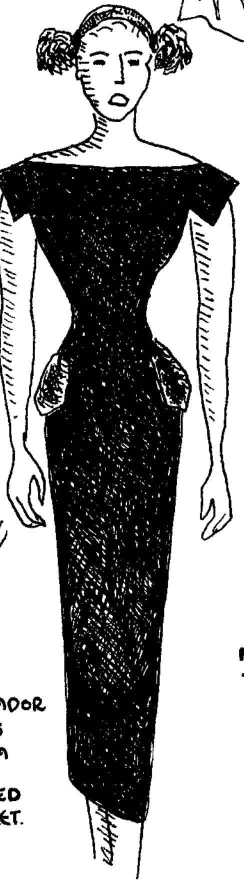
THIS ROSE HAT IS CALLED CARNIVORE.



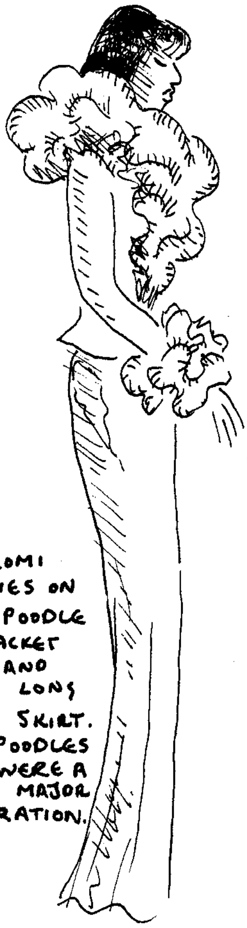
HELENA IS WAITING FOR MORE FRILLS TO BE ADDED.



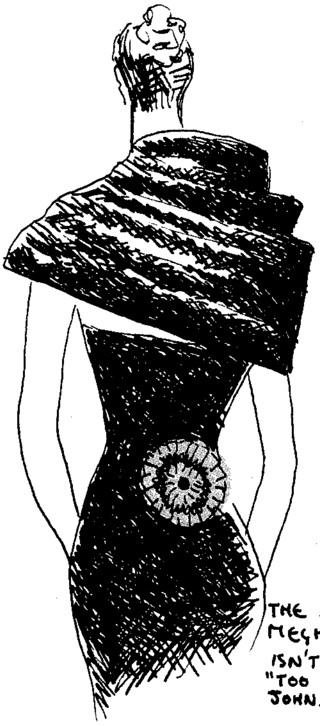
AN ASSISTANT FILLS IN THE ZEBRA STRIPES ON A JACKET WITH A FELT-TIP PEN.



THE TOREADOR DRESS GETS A HAT CALLED SECRET.



NAOMI TRIES ON A POODLE JACKET AND LONG SKIRT. POODLES WERE A MAJOR INSPIRATION.



THE ROSETTE ON MEGHAN'S DERRIERE ISN'T WORKING. "TOO FASHIONY," THINKS JOHN.

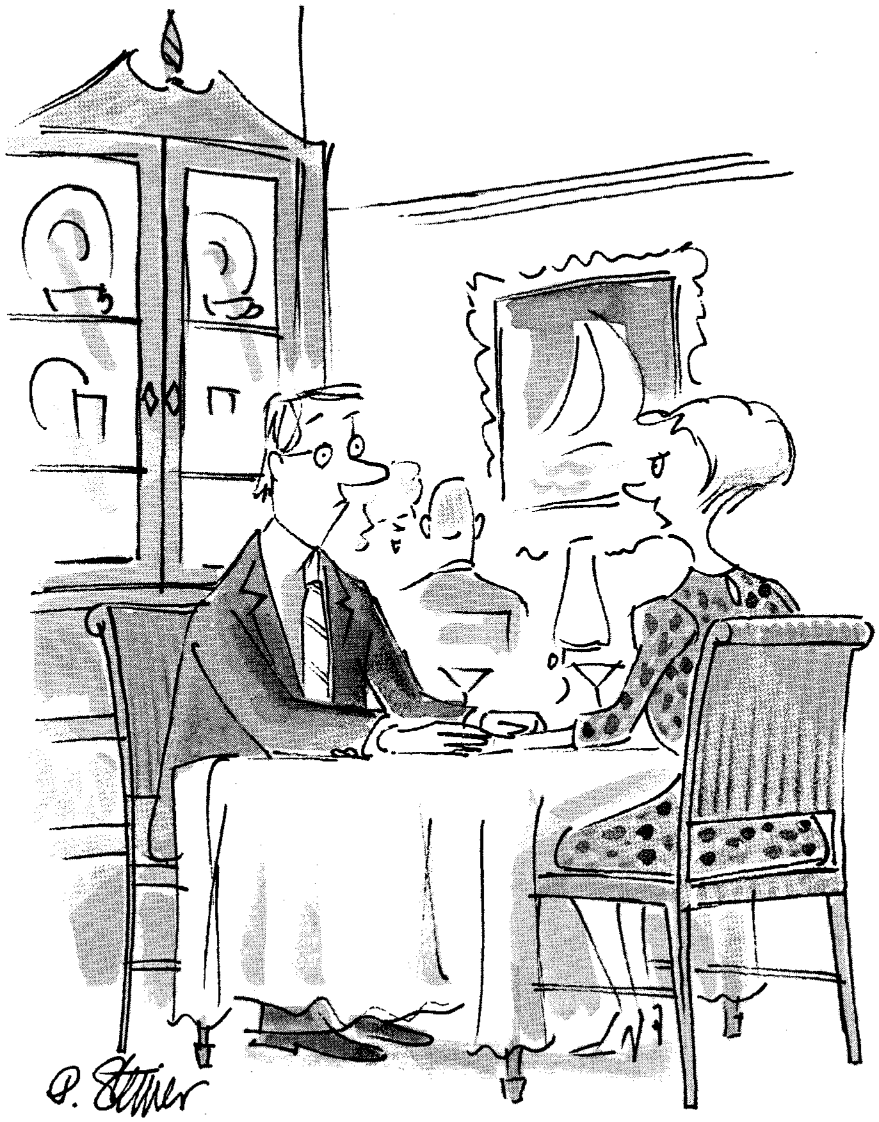
cisms, to undertake cures, and, it may be, even to baptize!" By the year 200, Christian feminism was clearly brought to an end by the text known in the New Testament as Paul's First Epistle to Timothy: "Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent." This consensus of masculine hegemony "has continued to dominate the majority of Christian churches," Pagels wrote. "Nearly 2,000 years later, in 1977, Pope Paul VI, Bishop of Rome, declared that a woman cannot be a priest 'because our Lord was a man'! The Nag Hammadi sources, discovered at a time of contemporary social crises concerning sexual roles, challenge us to reinterpret history—and to reevaluate the present situation."

Pagels determined as she read the Gnostic texts that the Church Fathers feared their strangeness and variety—especially the way they gave individual knowledge and transcendence priority over obedience to a patriarchal orthodoxy. Some of her critics, however, including Raymond E. Brown, a Catholic theologian, believe that Pagels went overboard in her claims for the importance of the Gnostic texts. In a mostly negative assessment in the *Times Book Review*, Brown said that in "The Gnostic Gospels" Pagels gives more than "about nine-tenths" of her discussion to the Gnostics, "which will leave the reader cheering for them and wishing that the narrow-minded orthodox had not won." But in fact, Brown argued, the Gnostics were élitist, and thought of other Christians as ignorant. "Read the texts themselves," Brown wrote, "and you may emerge 'conservative-chic,' concluding that crusty old Irenaeus"—the orthodox Bishop of Lyons—"was right, after all, to regard the gnostics as the crazies of the second century."

For the most part, though, the critical reception was positive, and most accepted Pagels' assurance in the book that she did not intend to proselytize for or celebrate the Gnostics but, rather, to underline the complexity of early Christianity and explain some of the social and political reasons for the rise of an orthodoxy.

"One of the real reasons Elaine's book was a blockbuster was that it shattered the entire premise of the ecumenical movement," Malcolm Diamond, a professor emeritus in the Princeton Religion Department, has said. "There was this idea that you could get back to the presumed unity of the early Church, get away from the fragmentation in Christendom. What Elaine showed was that there was more fragmentation in the early Church than there is today. That was startling—and it was just one point of many. She wanted to show, through the Gnostic manuscripts, the active role of women in early Christianity and how they were forced out of the governance of the Church. She gave such perspective on the established Gospels and the diverse traditions they competed with. It was her point to go back to that time when you have it all up for grabs and take the competitors seriously and are not just dismissive of it. Her achievement wasn't a matter of discovery so much as it was a novel attitude to noncanonical material."

Not only did "The Gnostic Gospels" gain wide academic and popular audiences but Pagels herself became, through no choice or desire of her own, a kind of spiritual sage for some of her readers. She still gets letters from religious seekers describing their encounters with the Gnostic Gospels; some of the letter writers approach Pagels not as a scholar of ancient texts but as the texts' evangelist or author. "Once in a while, it all gets a little weird," she said, laughing. When *Vogue* asked the actor Harvey Keitel for an interview before the release of "The Piano," Keitel asked that the interviewer be Elaine Pagels. "The Gnostic Gospels," he said, had changed his life. (Pagels, for her part, refused the assignment—"I don't know how to write that way," she says—but she did sit in on the interview, at Keitel's request.) Not long ago, Pagels met a woman who was the



"If I were a car, you could find the words."

head of a Gnostic church in Palo Alto. "I was quite enchanted by her and delighted by her," Pagels told me. "She said she met some people at Orly Airport who told her about an ancient order—the Order of Mary Magdalene."

"But this is serious stuff," Pagels said. "It's fermenting. People are beginning to think about incorporating into the canon elements of Christianity that were lost. There are many people, of course, who have abandoned Christianity altogether and have gone out in search of more experiential modes of access to the divine, like chanting, channelling spirits—you name it. Gnosticism isn't a matter of belief. It's not about that. That's why I think the analogy is with Zen Buddhism, or Buddhism in general. It has to do with dimensions of experience and meditation. It's about practice, spiritual discipline, and the religious imagination. If you look at one of the Gnostic texts, the Discourse on the Eighth and the Ninth, it's a dialogue between a teacher and a student. The student has read all the books, and the teacher says, 'Now you have to go beyond what you've read in the books.' And he tries to take him to a higher level of contemplation, to an ecstatic state through mantras, chanting, and so forth. It's about leaving belief behind; *gnosis* means knowledge, or understanding. I'm not a missionary for Gnosticism, but what interests me about it is that it opens up dimensions other than the ones usually available in churches or on the basis of a statement of faith, which is often a series of propositions that many people do not believe."

"Adam, Eve, and the Serpent," which was published in 1988, grew out of "The Gnostic Gospels" and elaborated on the idea of an early pluralistic Christianity. According to Pagels, the Creation story and Adam's defiant decision to eat of the Tree of Knowledge, as it appears in the second and third chapters of Genesis, was widely understood by early Christian thinkers as a parable of human freedom. Such an understanding had a profound influence on behavior: sexuality was without stigma, marriage was considered no less holy than celibacy, divorce was considered a regrettable but tolerable event. In Christianity's early manifestation, as a dissident Jewish sect, Pagels writes, its adherents championed the notion of free will. "So long as Christianity remained a persecuted movement," she wrote, "the majority of Christian preachers proclaimed the plain and powerful message of freedom that appealed to so many people within the Roman world—perhaps especially to those who had never experienced freedom in their everyday lives."

With the conversion of the Roman emperor Constantine in the year 313, and the rise of Christianity as a majority religion, the interpretation of the Creation story—the self-image of Western Christianity itself—changed radically. When the monk Jovinian argued that celibacy was no holier than marriage, he was denounced by the fourth-century theologians Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine, and was excommunicated. Augustine, whose pagan father had encouraged his youthful sexual adventures, gave up a Christian marriage that would have guaranteed him wealth and social status, and adopted a life of asceticism. He wrote about sex in the language of the addict, and, like some recovering addicts, he took an absolutist position: there is no middle ground on the question of lust; self-mastery is impossible; all men and women are fallen. In his interpretation of the second and third chapters of Genesis as the fall of all humankind, Augustine rejected the idea of free will and recoiled from human sexuality as innately sinful. It was Augustine's interpretation, Pagels writes, that became the orthodoxy of the Western church, displacing theologians as prominent as Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and John Chrysostom. Augustine's interpretation was linked not only to personal experience and thought but to the politics of his day: it proved useful to the emperor. Where once the revolutionary church had preached a message of human freedom in the face of the Roman oppressor, now, as Rome's official religion, it described human nature as inherently sinful, fallen, infirm, and in need of the absolute authority of the state's moral institution, the church.

One afternoon in Princeton, I asked Pagels why either Augustine's reading of Genesis or the New Testament versions of Satan still matter.

"It's true that many Christians today would say, 'Oh, the Devil, who believes that?'—as if it were a throwaway part of Christianity," Pagels said. "Liberal Christians would say the Devil is irrelevant. But that's not so. The dramatic tension of the whole Jesus story would not work without this figure, because, after all, the story is about the defeat of the Lord. Why did Jesus fail if his failure wasn't due to an enormously strong and evil force? The shape of these stories matters so much to the way we think. The details are essential. Just imagine, it was only about twenty years ago that people began to think that the use of 'he' as a general pronoun might be exclusive of women. At a certain point, one realizes that it does make a difference. It might be a trivial example of the way a culture is formed, even without malice, but it points to the shape of the social order. In the case of 'he,' it points to the efficiency of patriarchy. In my own work, I've never been concerned with changing the language but, rather, with identifying the language—in this case, the language about the Devil—and seeing its effects on the social order. When I was thinking about 'Adam, Eve, and the Serpent,' I took notice that there had been all these recent changes in attitudes toward divorce and homosexuality, and yet for a very long time these sexual attitudes of Western culture were just built into the universe. Why? Where does all this come from? Much of what seems to be written into nature itself is a matter of cultural patterning. You don't have to believe in these religions for them to have an effect. The work is exciting because you begin to uncover what Jungians would call the cultural unconscious.

"What I'm interested in is how these images and stories relate to the way we live. How do we interpret our own lives and understand ourselves through them? How does that imaginative process affect our dreams, how does it appear in our metaphors? How does our imagination of the invisible relate to the way we act and feel and think? With Adam and Eve, it is clear that the social attitudes we have as children are shaped by the story. Satan is a way of perceiving opponents. You may not believe the mythology of such a universe, but it's in you, a background perception."

PAGELS lectures at universities all the time, but few appearances have meant more to her than her recent talk on the Satan book at the Harvard Divinity School. Parts of the book have appeared in academic journals, and she has shown the manuscript to some colleagues, but here was a chance to rehearse her arguments in front of a room filled with graduate students and, most important, her former mentors—Helmut Koester, Krister Stendahl, and several other scholars of the New Testament and of early-Christian history. That day, Pagels was getting over a cold passed along to her by her children, and by the time our cab reached Newark Airport she was thinking about turning around and going home. But a few hours later, at the Divinity School lectern, she seemed miraculously transformed: healthy and ready for cosmic battle.

Pagels gave her reading of the development of the New Testament Satan and its role in the development of Christian anti-Semitism. The New Testament Gospels, she said, identify Satan not with the Romans (despite the dominant Roman role in the trial and execution of Christ) but, rather, with their Jewish contemporaries—"the intimate enemy." In the Gospel of Matthew (23:13-15), for example, Jesus accuses the Pharisees, the Jewish majority, of being demon-possessed and sons "of hell"; similarly, in the narrative of the Passion, Mark (14:53-64) makes it plain that "the chief priests and elders and the scribes" assembled and "condemned him as deserving death." Mark concludes that the Jewish court, the Sanhedrin, as well as "the crowd"—the Jewish majority—were responsible for the death of Jesus.

The figure of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, grows increasingly benign with each successive Gospel; the Jewish enemy is framed in ever more hostile rhetoric. While historical testimonies of the time, from Philo and Josephus, describe Pilate's cruelty in detail, recounting that he would routinely round up Jews suspected of anti-Roman activity, he becomes in the Gospels a nearly sympathetic character, the better to depict the Jews as the satanic agents of Jesus' execution. The social result of this interpretation in the Gospels is that, as the Christian movement became more Gentile, its followers could find canonical justification for the hatred of Jews. At one point, Pagels looked up at the packed auditorium and said, simply, "This material is painful."

By the end of "The Origin of Satan," it becomes clear that, while Pagels does not consider herself an evangelist for Gnostic wisdom, she does in some cases show a clear preference for a Gnostic interpretation over a canonical orthodox one. After expressing her profound regret about how the figure of Satan has distorted human perspective and heightened aggression among peoples, she turns to the Gnostic Gospel of Philip, which, she says, offers a more subtle and promising discussion of good and evil. In the Gospel of Philip, Satan never appears. The message taught is not that there exists an eternal clash between good and evil but, rather, that each individual needs to know his potential for doing evil. "Instead of envisioning the power of evil as an alien force that threatens and invades human beings from outside, the author of Philip urges each person to recognize the evil within, and consciously eradicate it," she writes.

At the conclusion of the lecture, someone made the point that, while Satan is a critical figure in the four Gospels, he is almost absent from the other great New Testament literature, the Epistles of Paul, for example. Pagels had no argument with that, but she said to me later on that the Gospels, as literature, have an extraordinary narrative power that the Epistles, for all their theological importance, cannot match. "The Origin of Satan" is, in fact, a one-sided book. Pagels admits as much. Balance is not really her intention; in all her books, she is best at shaking up and rearranging set ways of thinking. She leaves the intellectual tidying up for others.

Once the graduate students and the guests had left the hall, Pagels went off to dinner at the faculty club with her mentors and colleagues. She heard a fair amount of criticism. Koester told me later that he saw "loose ends" in the book; Pagels, he said, finds evidence of Satan in texts "where it really isn't there." Stendahl wished that Pagels had covered Paul's Epistles, but he was more enthusiastic. "When the book comes out, there will, of course, be a certain amount of defensiveness," he told me. "People will say she is overdoing it. But I don't think so. Demonization is one of the plagues of religious tradition because you are dealing with an intense rhetoric intensified to the voltage of the divine. My only comments would be that she has not taken account of the countervailing rhetoric and traditions in Christianity: love your enemies, and so on." In fact, at the end of her book, Pagels does mention a tradition of generosity of heart in Christianity that runs from St. Francis of Assisi to the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.

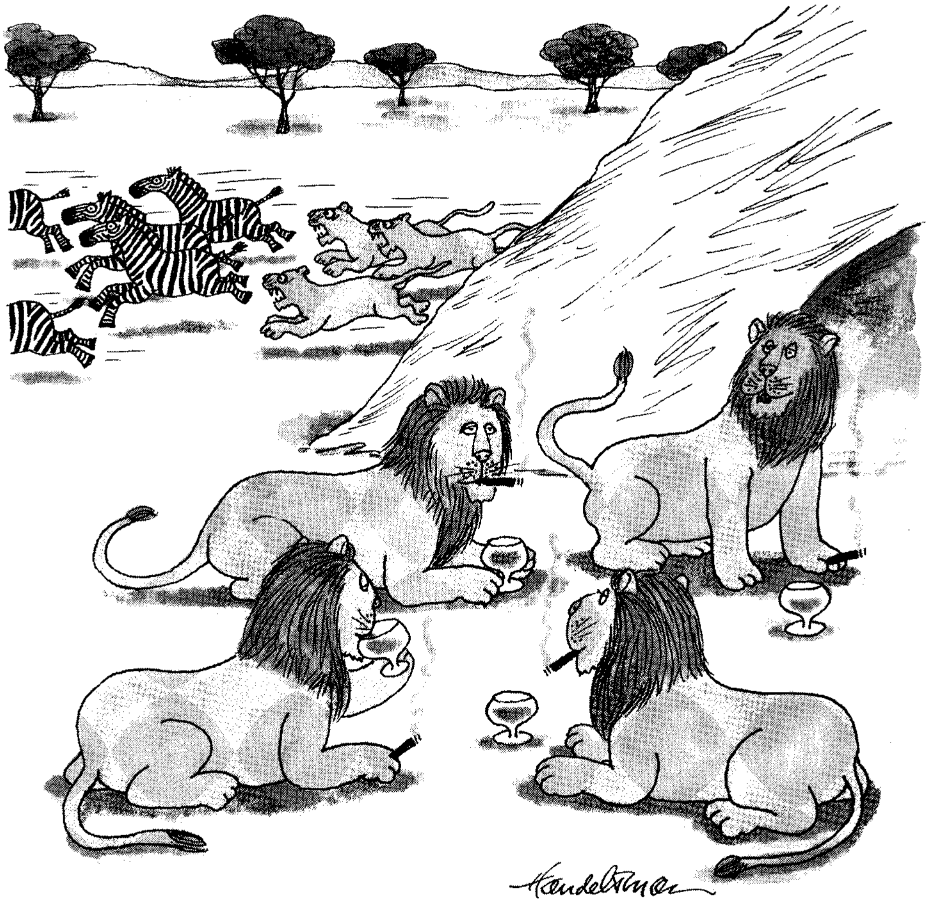
After dinner, Pagels felt like talking some more. It was late, and I figured that, what with her cold, the trip, and the long day, she would be exhausted. On the contrary, she said that she felt cured, even charged up, by the lecture and the arguments over dinner.

"After my son died," she said, "I went to the Church of the Heavenly Rest, up on Fifth Avenue, just to see if I could stand to walk in there for the funeral service that would be held a couple of days later. I was with an Israeli friend. It was the Easter season, and I stood there listening to the Good Friday liturgy, all about the death of Jesus, and, probably because my friend is Jewish, I became intensely aware of what was being said. I was taken aback, really distressed, because within that story are these terrible accusations against the Jews about the execution of Jesus. It struck me so deeply, this demonic language. Animosity between groups is a human universal, but what's different here is the moral and religious dimension of the animosity. The Greeks had certain jealousies of the Jews, the Romans had their resentments, but Christianity added this moral and religious dimension."

Back in Princeton a few days later, I asked her if she thought that by publishing "The Origin of Satan" she would have an effect beyond the academy—whether the laying bare of the demonic language in the Gospels would make any change at all in demonization in the modern world.

"When I was talking at Harvard about trying to dislodge the inherited assumption of a structure of right and wrong in the universe, that was something I needed to do because of events in my life," Pagels said. "That doesn't mean I'm relativistic about good and evil. The book is a meditation on the issue of how we *perceive* good and evil. For me, the book moves from a consideration of the social patterning about good and evil to an awareness of the individual's capacity for evil.

"When I read the Gospels now and I come across the figure of Satan, instead of gliding over it as part of the story, I see it as raising a sort of warning flag, and I think, Ah, what is this writer doing now? What is the clue? What group of people are we speaking about and who is saying this? I became really interested in the structure of who is being demonized and who is doing the demonizing. It's a question of awareness instead of just reading the story by rote. When that happens, it changes the way we read our own history. There was a time, for instance, when very few people who didn't suffer from it were aware of racism as an idea. Now this question is a part of our culture. It's not undone, but most people find it impossible to be unaware of racism. The same is true of sexism or homophobia. So that, too, is what the work on Satan and demonization is about. It's about being aware."



"Shall we join the ladies?"

• •

NOW that Pagels has finished going over the proofs for "The Origin of Satan," she is starting to consider her next project. This time, she is thinking about the problem of religious participation—the contrast between how people can participate in religious traditions and rituals quite apart from accepting basic propositions of the Church. "What happens with Christians—people brought up nominally as Christians, as I was—they ask themselves, Well, do I really believe that?" Pagels said. "Do I believe that Jesus was the son of God, or whatever. And if they answer the question in the negative, they tend to abandon the tradition. That's quite different from Judaism. You can go to a seder and it doesn't matter if the person next to you is observant or is just home for the holidays. Everybody can participate in the seder, or go to a service. What you think about it or believe about it is not necessarily important. Rather, it's a kind of connection with a community. In a Christian community, that doesn't exist as much. Many people, if they don't believe, leave the religious traditions behind."

Sometimes, in our conversations, I got the feeling that the invisible world is still very much a presence for Pagels. She talks about Heinz often. He is there in her talk and, it seems, in her being. The loss must still be unbearable. At the same time, she told me that for the past few years she had been seeing "a wonderful man," a prominent law professor at Columbia named Kent Greenawalt. Like Pagels, Greenawalt was widowed six years ago; he has three sons ranging in age from twenty-four to seventeen.

"When you're seeing Elaine now, you're seeing someone who has gone through horrible stuff," her friend Elizabeth Diggs said. "If something terrible happens to you, you can either become heroic in the face of the awfulness of it and end up a better and stronger person or become diminished by it, become a victim and give in to self-pity and rage. After a time, Elaine came out on the other side. She's come out larger and more generous, kinder and more mature."

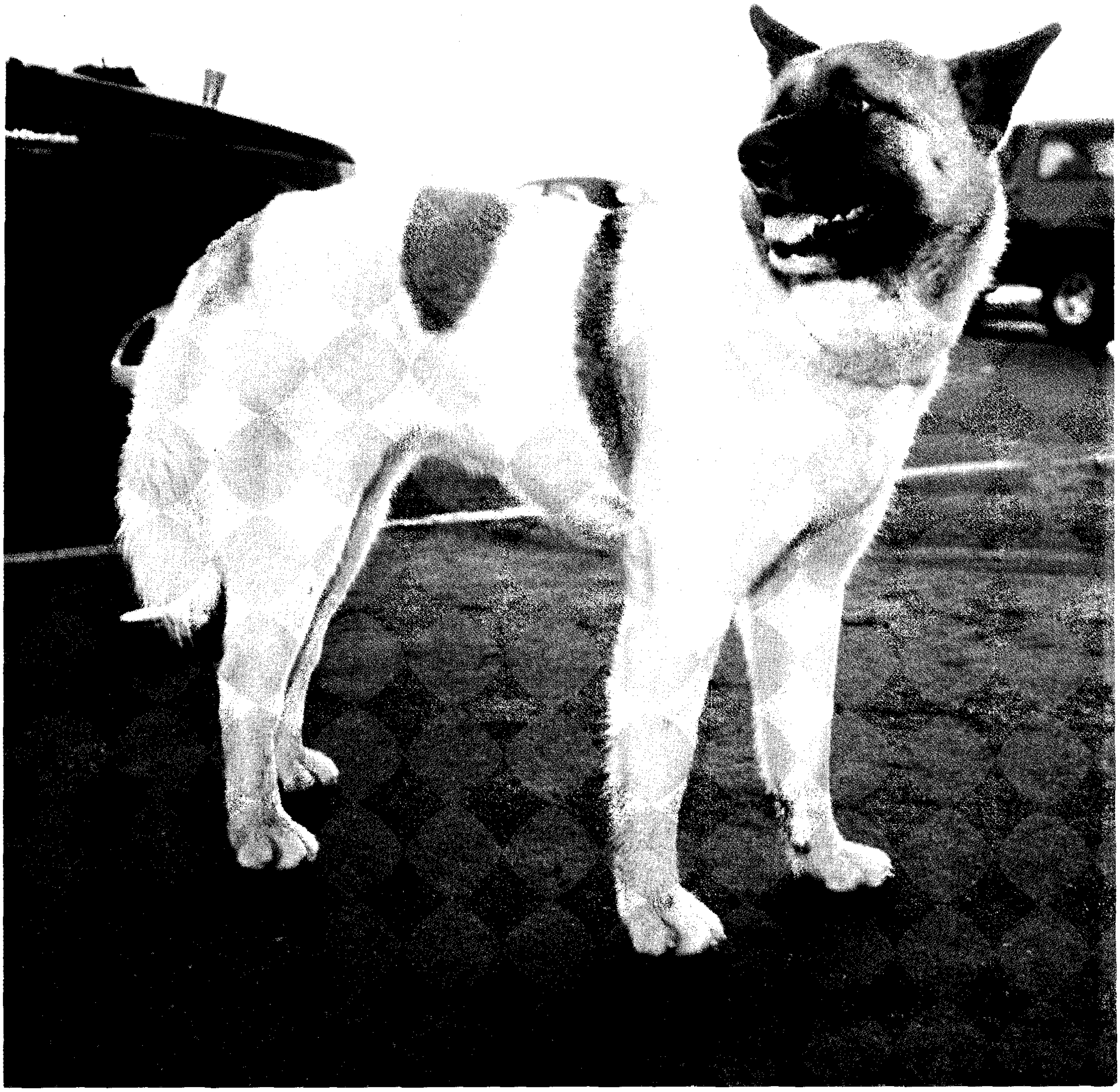
At the end of my last meeting with Pagels in Princeton, I mentioned what Elizabeth Diggs had said—that she had changed in the years since the deaths of Mark and Heinz. Pagels smiled. "At first, what I really felt had changed was that I unwillingly had to take on many of the tasks that Heinz had taken on in our life together—as a parent, as a provider, as a taxpayer, as an organizer, as the person who takes care of the car," she said. "There are certain ecological structures in any marriage—some with a traditional gender bias and some not. Simply, people take on certain roles. In a way, I had to do everything. But, most of all, I also wanted to take on the challenge of not giving up, of not despairing. Because Heinz was on the side of life. He loved life. He was full of explorative excitement, interest, passion. I realized that it would be no honor to him to say, 'I can't take this, I can't go on, it's too hard.' Somehow, I wanted to take on something of what I'd learned from him, the way he embraced life, with all its dangers and difficulties. I was challenged to do that. I can't say I've done it, but that's what I wanted to do."

"The Origin of Satan" will be published in June. It is dedicated to the living: "To Sarah and David with love." That same month, Pagels will marry Kent Greenawalt in an Episcopal church in Princeton. "It's like the beginning of a different life," she said. ♦

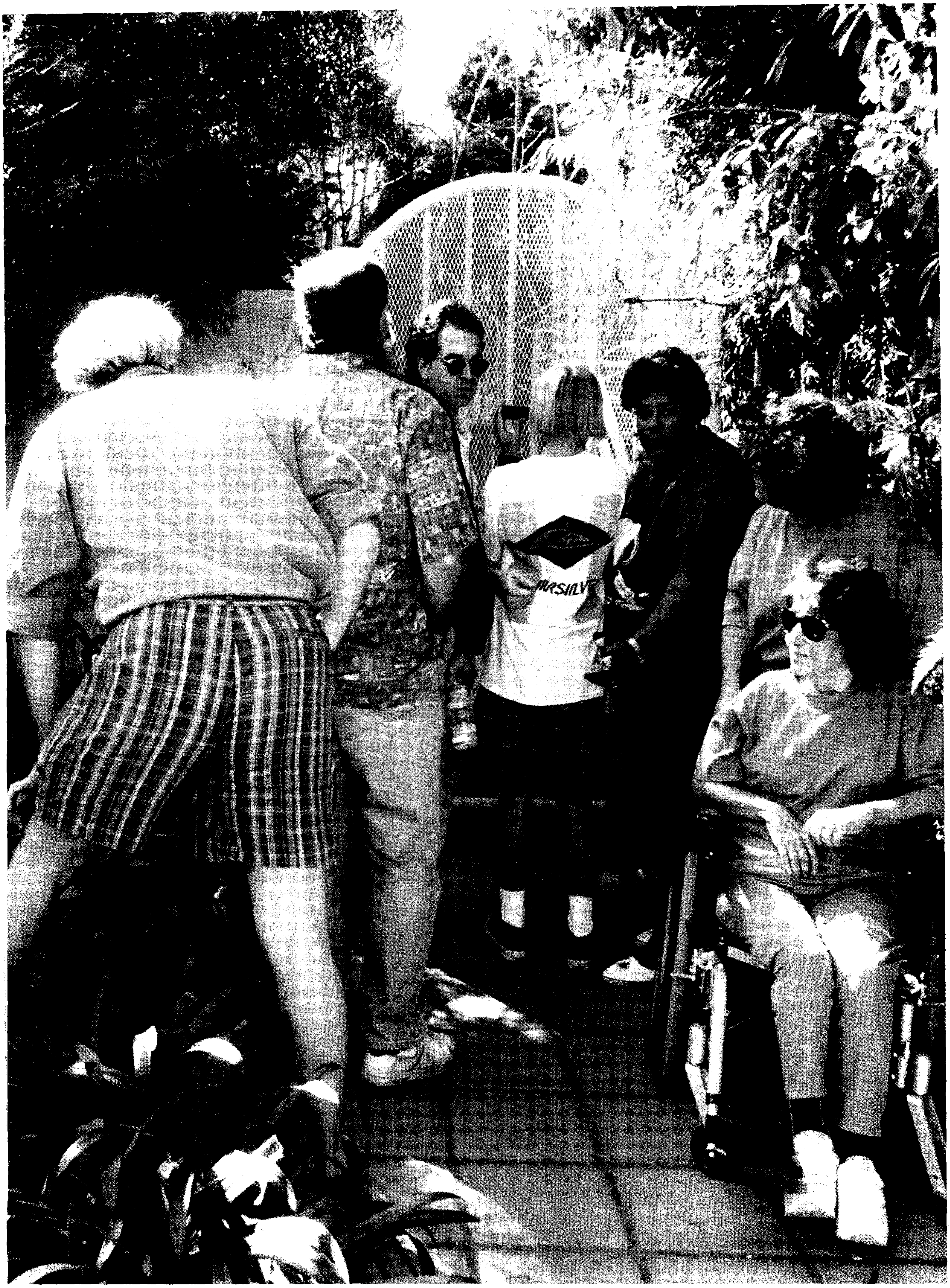
ALBUM

LOS ANGELES, 1995

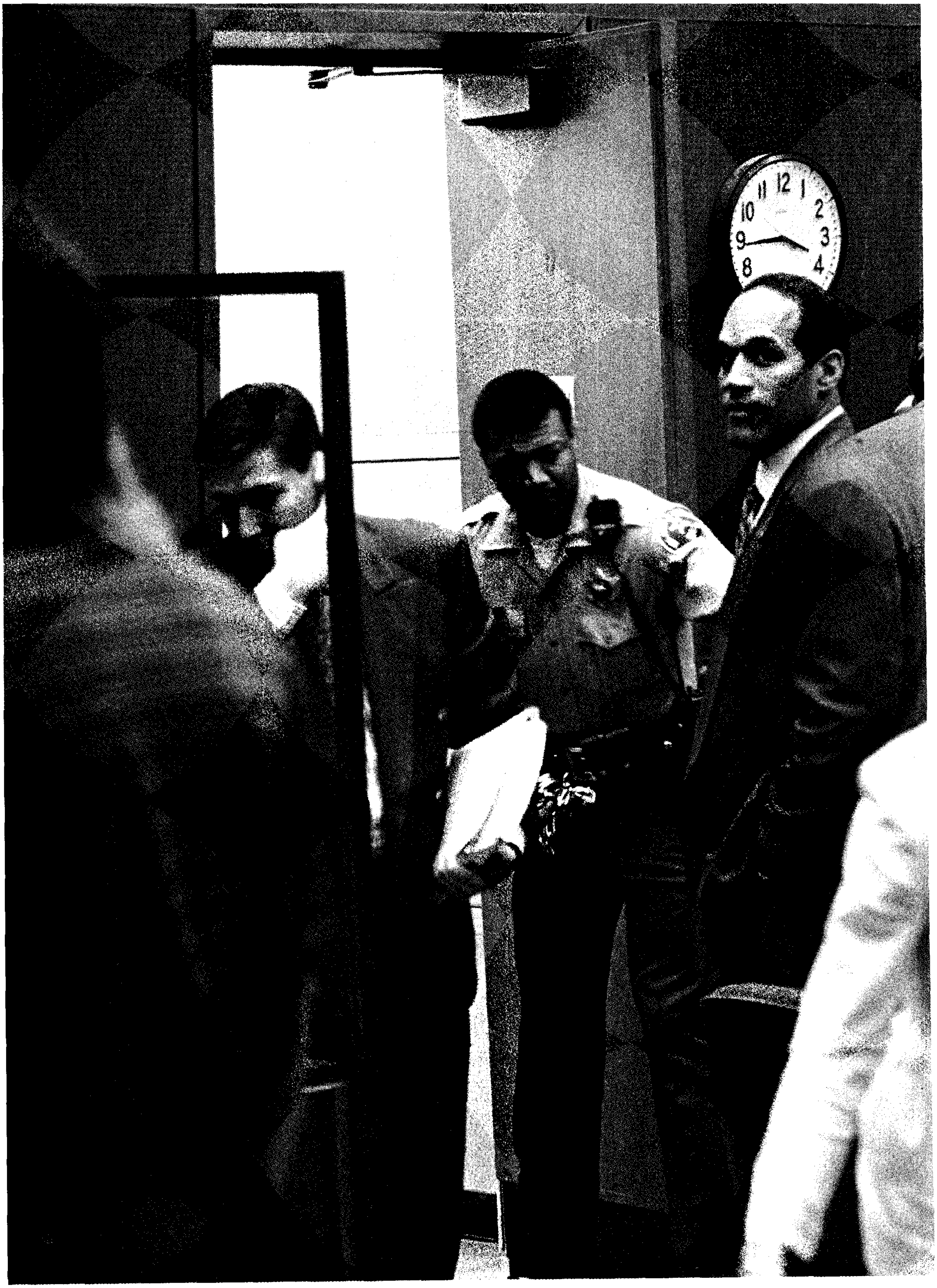
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANNIE LEIBOVITZ

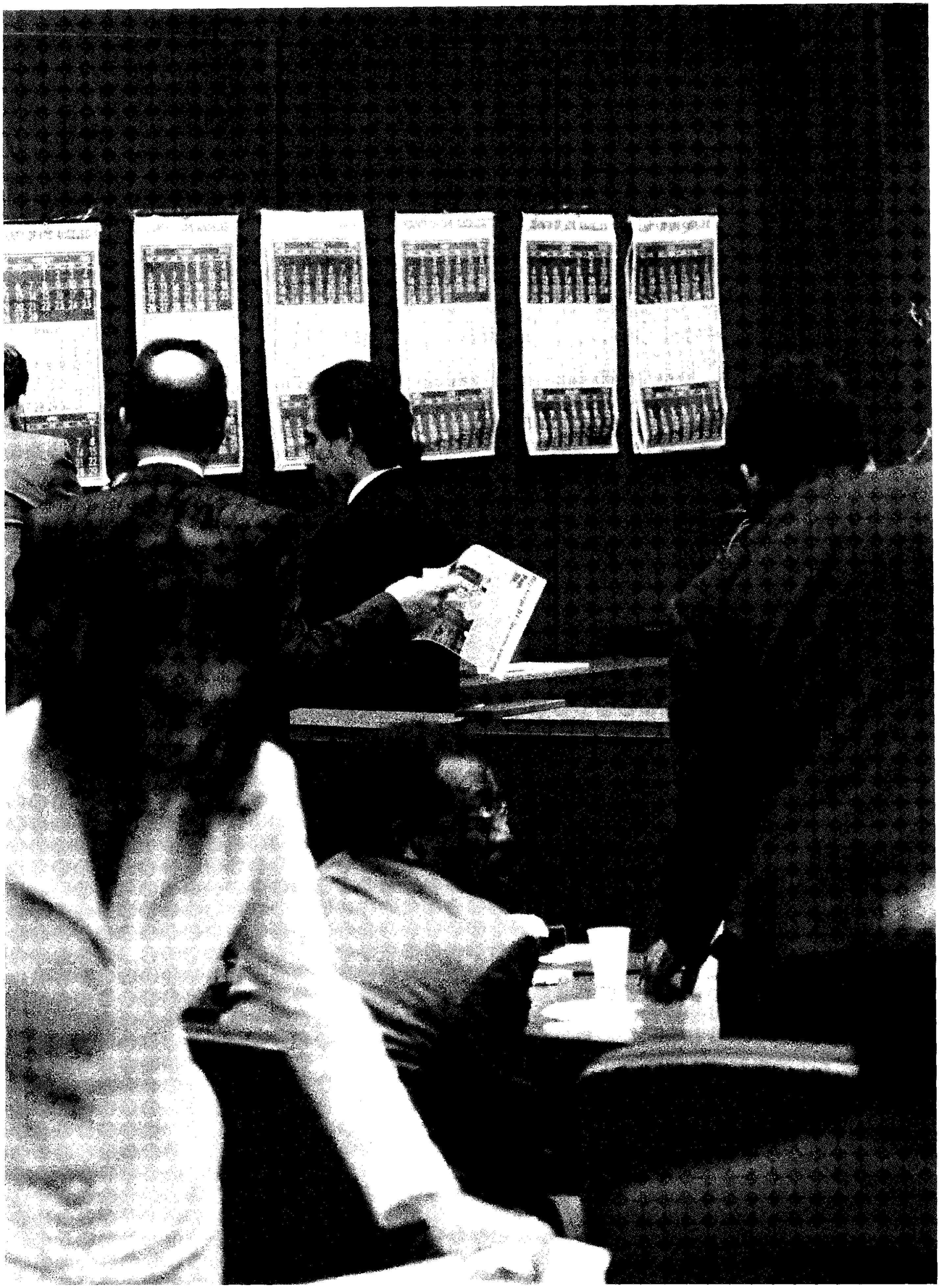


EYEWITNESS *Kato, Nicole Brown Simpson's Akita. Laguna Beach, Saturday, February 18th.*

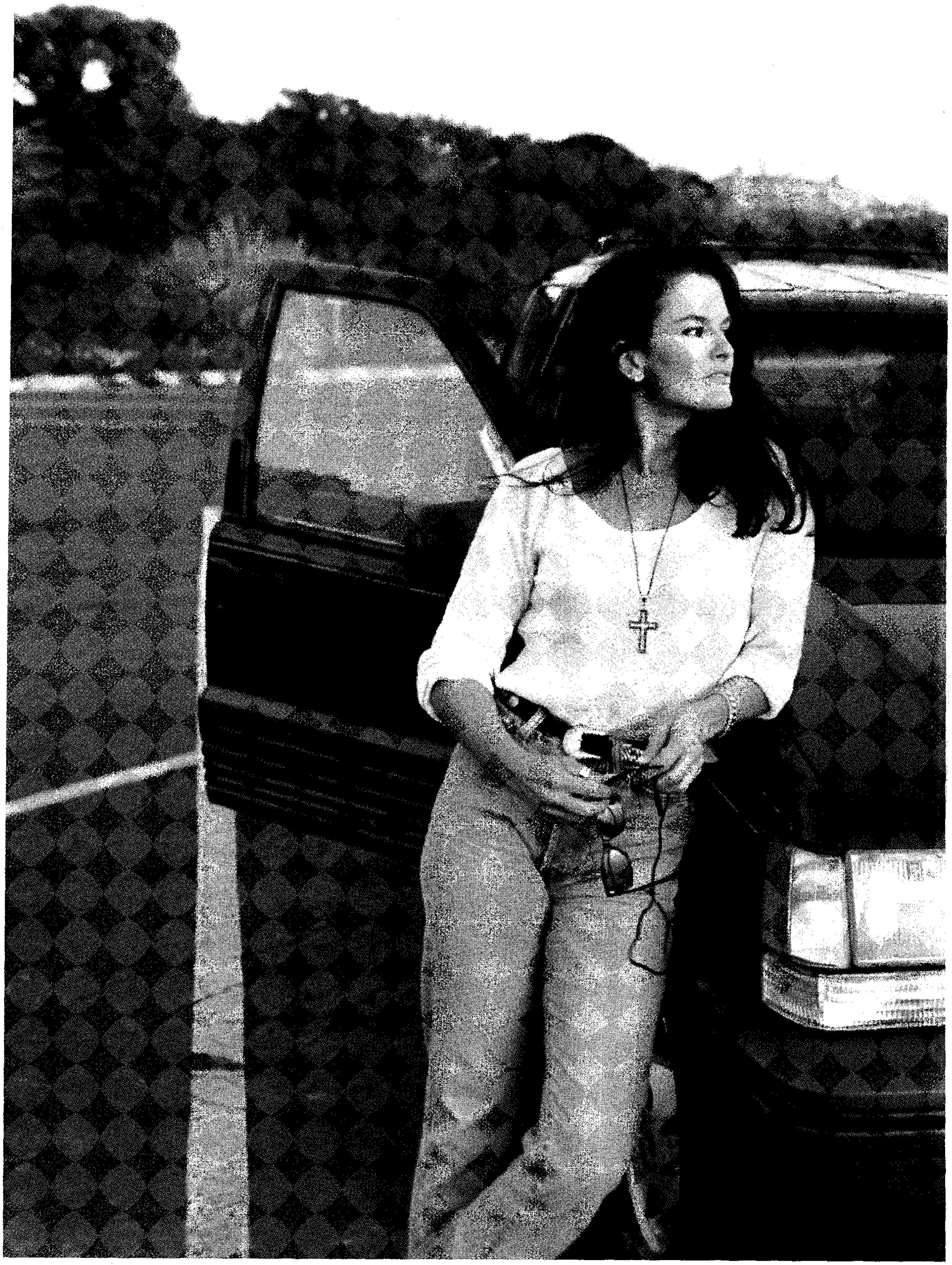


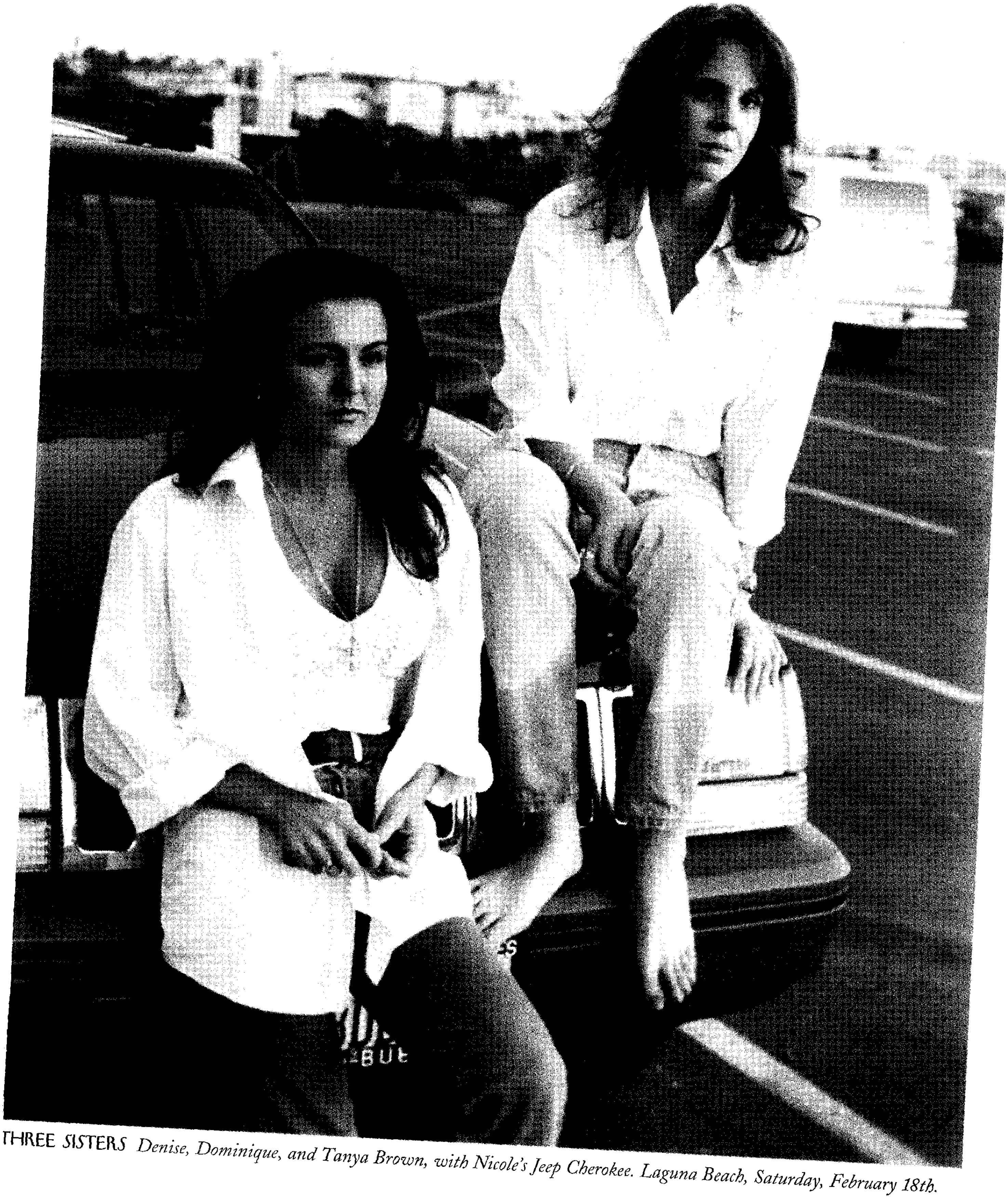
STAR MAP *Sightseers at 875 South Bundy Drive, Brentwood, the murder site. Sunday, February 19th.*



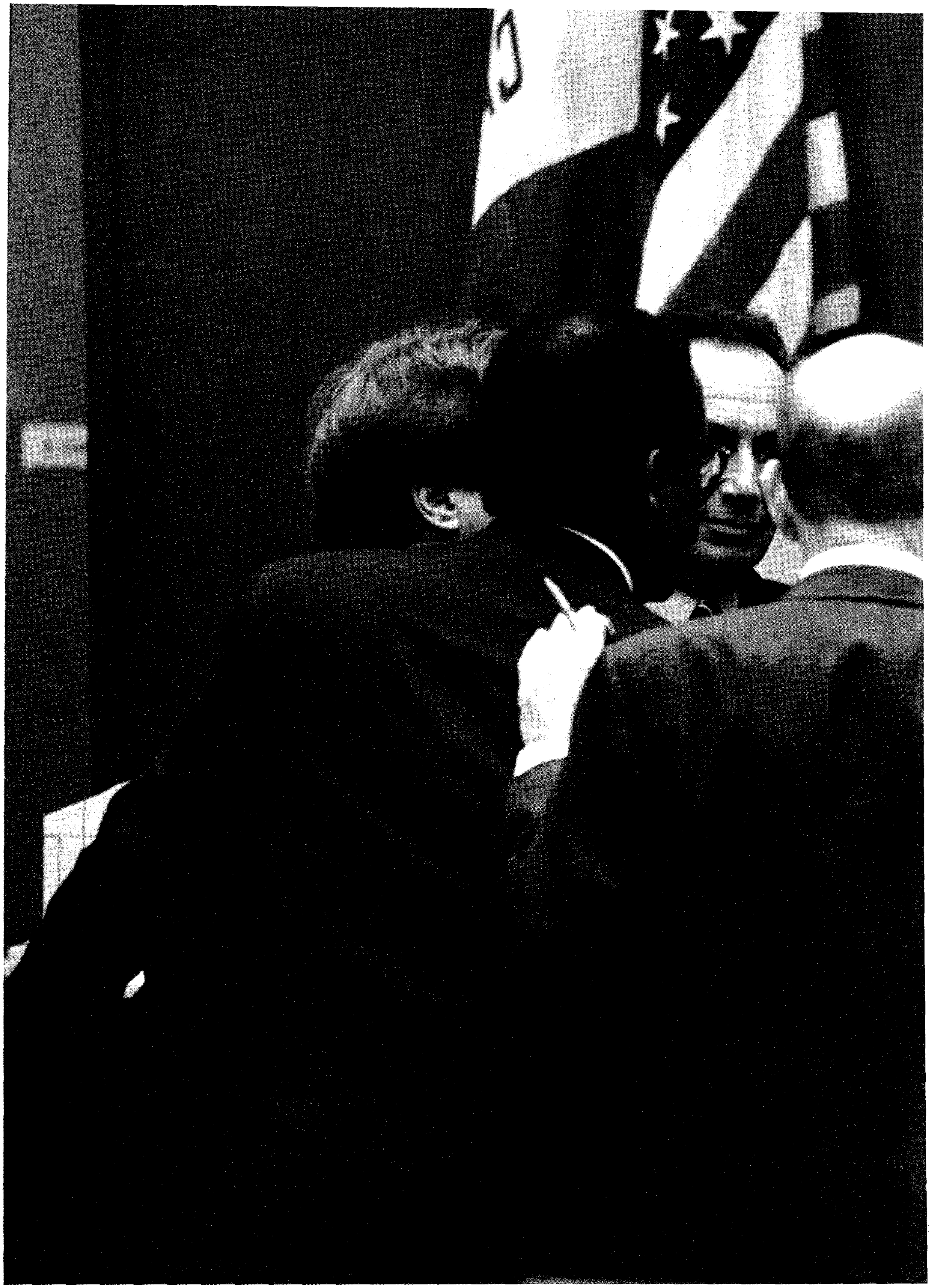


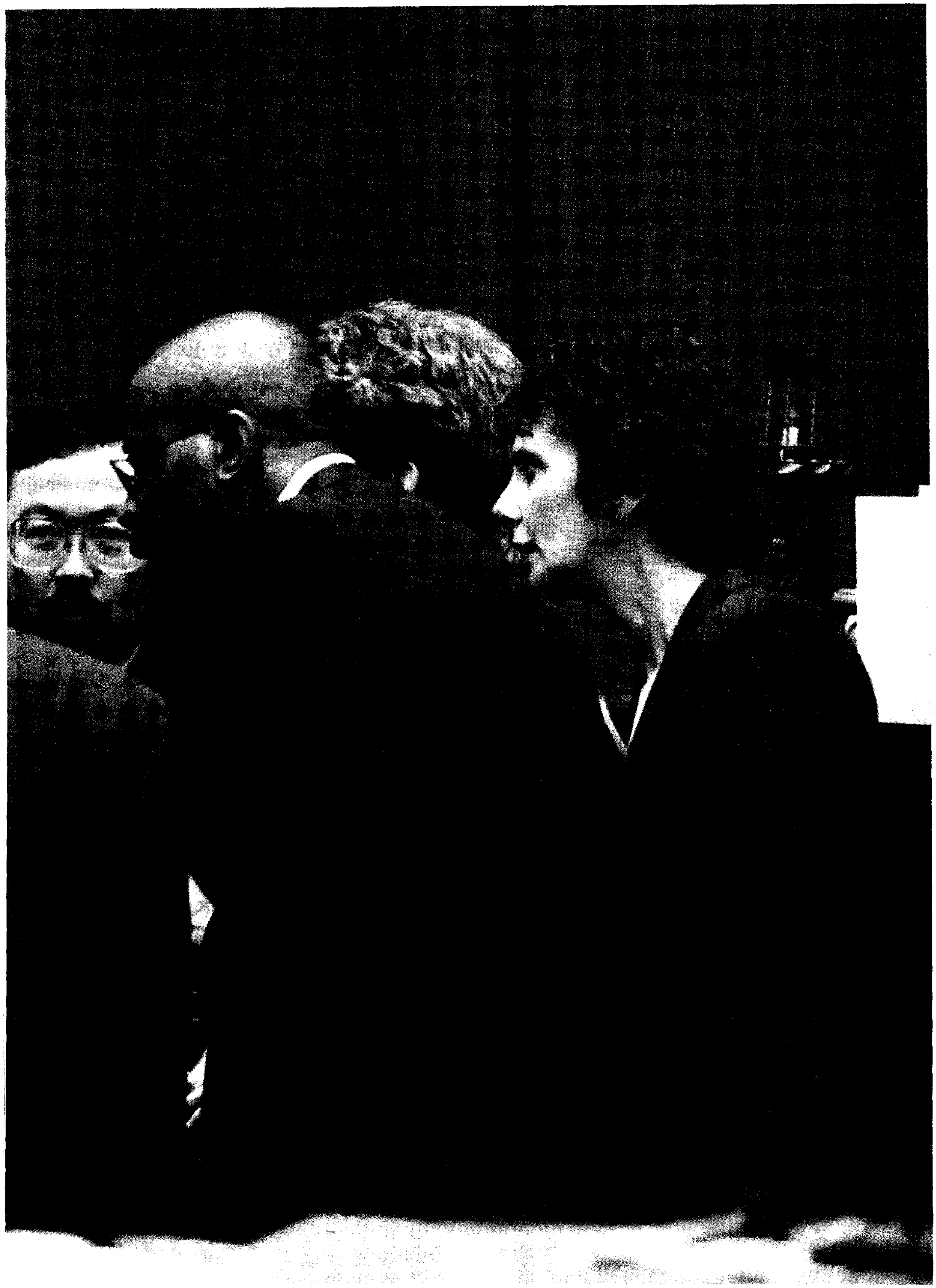
RECESS *Department 103, Criminal Courts Building. Friday, March 3rd.*





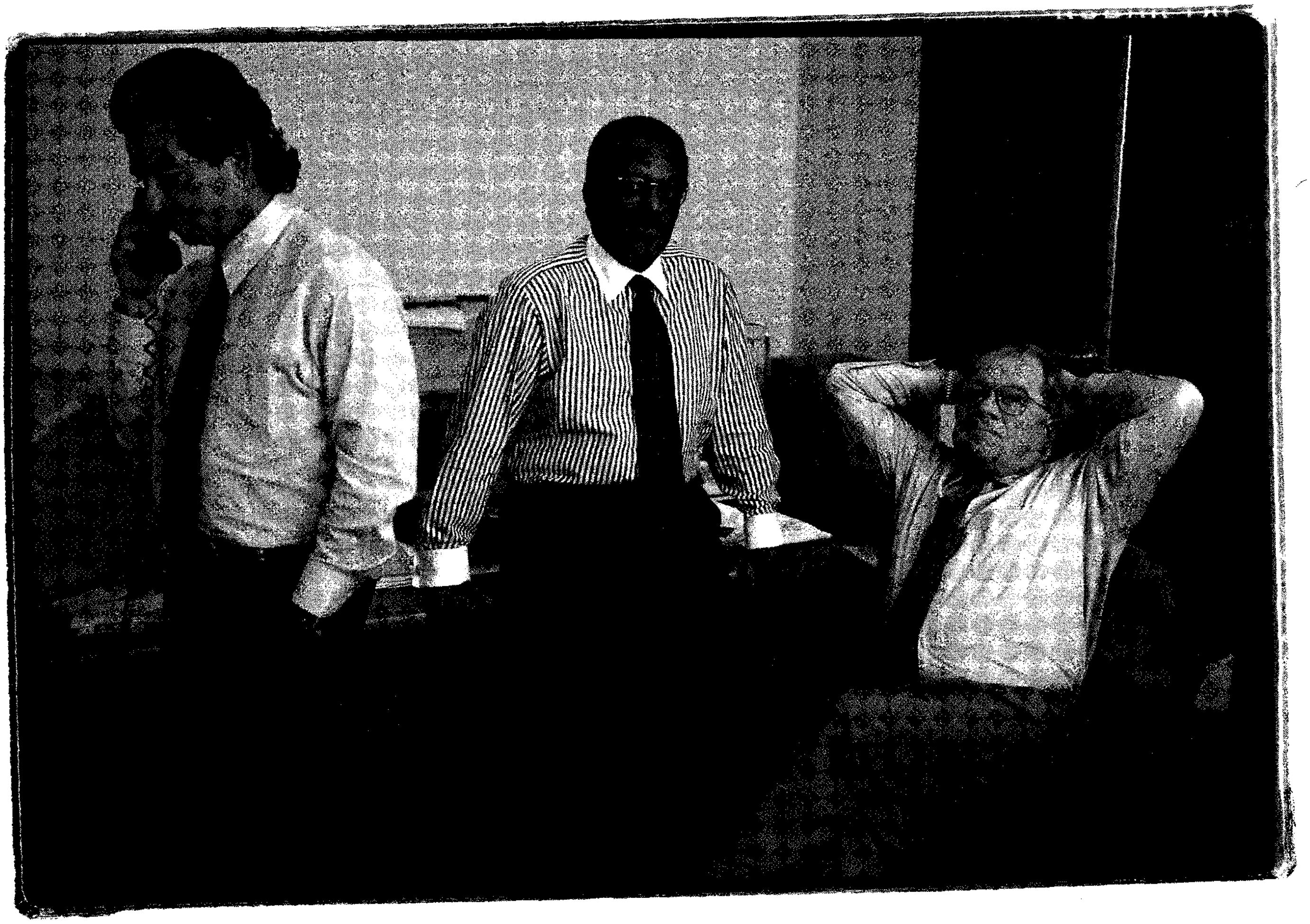
THREE SISTERS *Denise, Dominique, and Tanya Brown, with Nicole's Jeep Cherokee. Laguna Beach, Saturday, February 18th.*



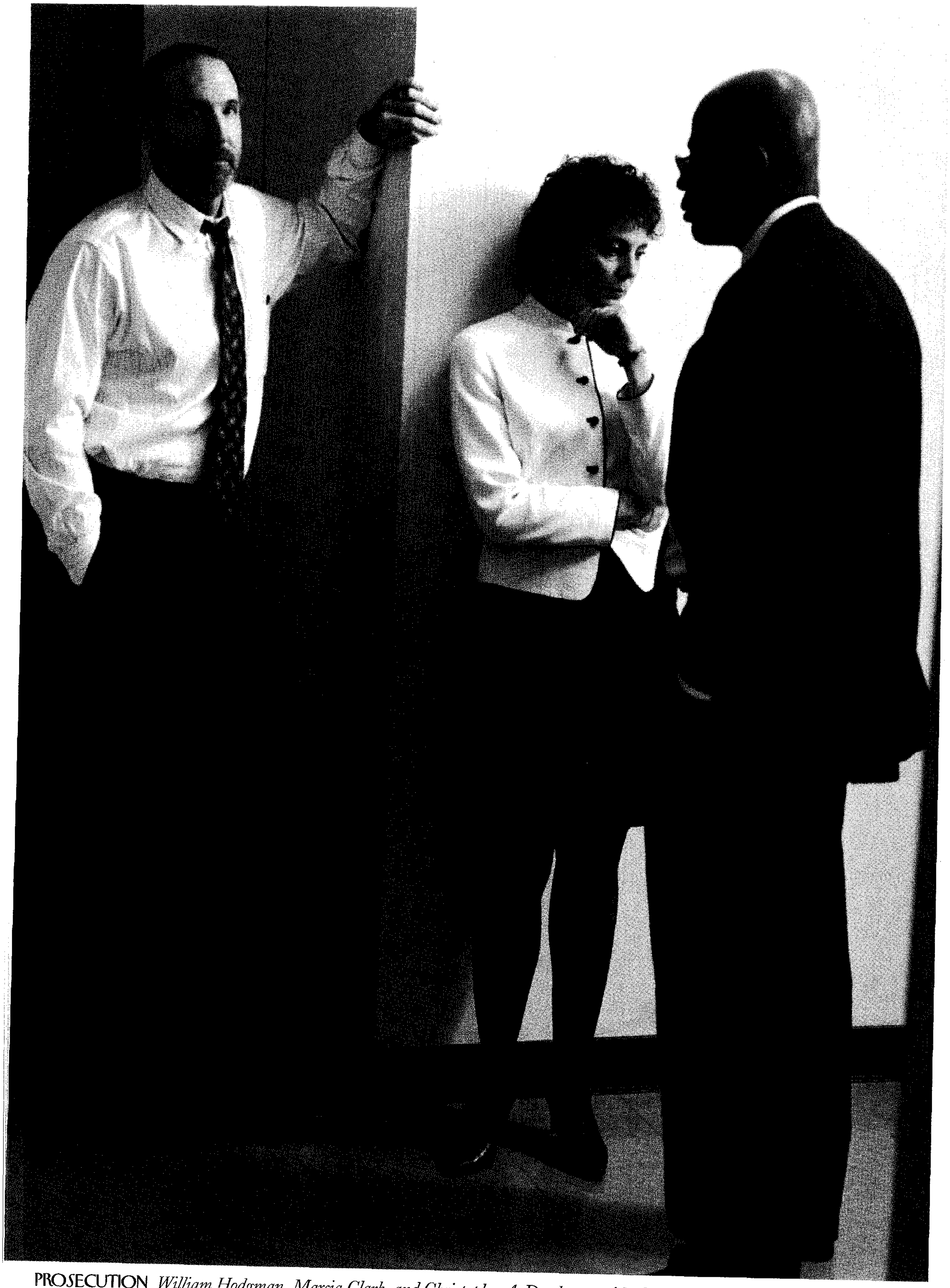


SIDEBAR *Defense attorneys, DNA experts, Judge Lance A. Ito, court reporter, and prosecutors. Department 103, Wednesday, March 15th.*

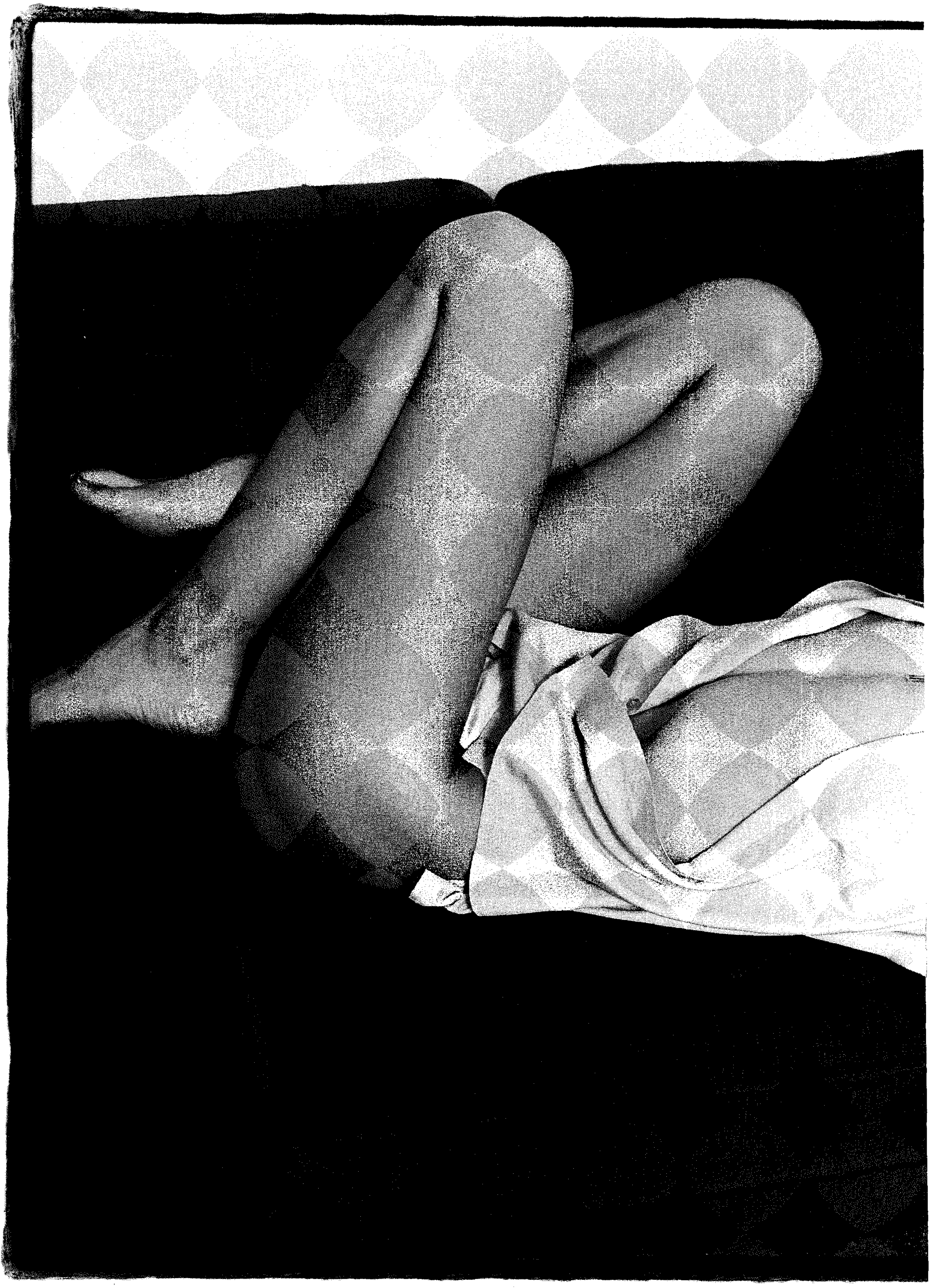
HOUSEGUEST *Brian (Kato) Kaelin in his apartment. Beverly Hills, Monday, February 20th.*



DEFENSE *Robert Kardashian, Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr., and F. Lee Bailey in Cochran's office suite. Friday, March 3rd.*



PROSECUTION *William Hodgman, Marcia Clark, and Christopher A. Darden, outside their offices. Thursday, March 2nd.*



GIRLFRIEND *The model Paula Barbieri at the Chateau Marmont hotel. West Hollywood, Saturday, March 4th.*

MOURNERS *Lauren and Michael Glass and Kim, Fred, and Patti Goldman at the gra*

ᶜRonald Goldman. Pierce Brothers Valley Oaks cemetery, Westlake Village, Monday, February 20th.

FICTION

THE DARK STAGE

BY DAVID PLANTE

FROM his seat in the stalls, Sir Edward was aware, more than of anything else in the play, of the saliva spurting from the mouth of a raging actor, of the way the high heel of the younger actress caught in the hem of her long dress, of the earring that fell from the lobe of the matronly actress when she swung around quickly. Though the actors ignored these wayward happenings—didn't wipe off the saliva, delivered the impassioned speech balanced unsteadily on one foot while the other was still caught in the hem, stepped over the earring—to Sir Edward these were the most interesting moments in the play. During the final scene, his concentration was focussed on a moth flying high over the actors' heads, zigzagging through a cloud of brightly lit dust.

That moth was still flying above the actors' heads when they came out to bow, and Edward told himself he mustn't stare at it. He was pretty sure the matronly actress, who stood at the center of the bowing line, saw him in the audience, and he tried to clap hard and fast when she left the line and came forward to bow alone, but he could only clap slowly, his large hands making soft sounds, if any. She was wearing a wide-brimmed hat with feathers, and a dress that revealed her high, pointed shoes, and she wore a brooch in the middle of the ruff of her rounded bodice. She left the stage first, then the others, and the stage went dark. For a moment, Edward saw the age spots and veins on the backs of his hands, still raised against the darkness.

He waited. The safety curtain came down as he walked along the now empty row of seats to the aisle, where an usherette was picking up a program someone had dropped on the red carpet.

TO get to the stage door, he had to go through the lobby and out under the illuminated portico, with its high white pillars, and along the wet pavement of St. James's to the first side street, and around the block to a narrow, deserted cul-de-sac at the back of the theatre. "STAGE DOOR" was painted in white letters on a square blue lamp over the double doors, one of which was open; through it Edward saw a floor of wide, unpainted planks and a dim passage, and, just to the side, a little room, like a cupboard, where a man with his shirtsleeves rolled up to his elbows was sitting on a chair tilted back against a wall and staring down. He looked up when Edward approached and asked for Dame Hilary West's dressing room, and, pointing to the stairs at the end of the passage, he told Edward, "That'll be No. 8."

The treads were wooden and the stairs steep. The pale-yellow walls were bare and shone in the electric light. It seemed to Edward that there was no one in the theatre. He knocked on the painted door and, hearing "Come in," he opened the door by its white porcelain knob.

Hilary, changed from her costume into a suit, was standing at a table; with her hands placed flat on it, she was leaning forward, as if to study closely the white plastic head that held the wig she had worn onstage. On the table next to the head was the hat with the feathers. She was in profile to Edward, and she remained that way for a moment; then she turned to him, raised her hands, clapped them together, and laughed.

"I was sure I saw you in the stalls," she said. "Why didn't you let me know you'd be here?"

He laughed lightly. "The fact is, I decided only this afternoon."

"I know your way of deciding to do something suddenly," she said. She went to him and hugged him and, stretching out her long, thin neck, offered him a cheek to kiss. Then, impulsively, she hugged him more tightly and kissed his cheek before she let him go.

He said, "The man at the stage door didn't even ask my name."

"Oh, you can't have visited an actress in her dressing room in a very, very long time. Leaving off your card disappeared at about the same time the man who kept the coal fires in the dressing rooms disappeared—and the woman who brought round tea."

She kicked her shoe toward the grate of a small fireplace, behind which was a modern electric fire, and gestured at the table, where there was an electric kettle and mugs.

"I suppose it has been some time," Edward said.

Hilary turned away from him so that the long silver chains around her neck clinked against one another. She always moved quickly and smoothly. She said, "It's a terrible play, isn't it?"

He laughed in a way that was also a shrug. In a corner of the room was a narrow bed with a red coverlet and square pillows in white, crocheted slips. The bed sagged in the middle.

With her hands to her hair, Hilary turned back to Edward and said, "Terrible, terrible."

He shrugged again. "I noticed a lot of things seemed to go wrong tonight."

"There are always things going wrong."

"I like the way you all ignore what would be immediately corrected if it were real life—someone would pick up the fallen earring."

Hilary waved her hands. She didn't want to talk about the play or the production. She came up close to Edward once more, and then, drawing back a little, she remembered to ask, "But where is Diane?"

He said, "Diane died two weeks ago."

Hilary's hands fluttered about her mouth, and she spoke through her fingers. "Died? But why didn't I know?" She lowered her hands. "Why didn't someone tell me? I don't read the papers, I wouldn't have seen the obit—but surely someone could have told me."

"*I* could have."

"Darling, you would have been too upset to do anything but sit in a darkened room. I know you. But don't we have any friends any longer who could have let me know?"

"Evidently not."

"Evidently," she said, "not."

"This is my first evening out since," Edward said.

ANTHONY RUSSO

"And to such a terrible play."

"Not really so terrible."

"It is. It is." She went to the table with the plastic head and the wig, and she seemed to look into the white face of the head, with its very fine nose and lips and big, blank eyes.

"Tell me," Edward asked. "Are you free?"

As if she were silently but intently communicating with the head, she didn't answer. Then, with a girlish swing of her hips, she faced him and asked, "Free?"

"For supper?"

"Yes, I am. I'm always free after performances. Always."

"I bought a game pie today for my supper. There's enough for two."

"I'd love that. I have a car. Do you?"

"I don't."

"Then we'll go in my car. The driver should be waiting just outside. He's always waiting just outside to take me home, alone, alone." Edward smiled at her, and she, recognizing that he had caught her acting, smiled gently back at him. "It's true," she said.

As they were descending the stairs, Hilary put her arm in Edward's and went on, "I'm very touched, you know, that you should want to see me your first night out."

The driver, a slim young Indian man, opened the back door of the car for them. The car went from the West End to St. John's Wood, where the trees, dark in the light of the street lamps, were losing their leaves.

"I never go to the theatre anymore," Hilary said. "Never. Why should I expect anyone else to go?"

WHILE Edward set places with plates and silver from a cupboard in the basement dining room of the large house, Hilary walked the length of the table, bending her knees so that with each step her body dipped and then rose, and she ran a finger along the edge. At the end she examined the finger to see if it had collected any crumbs.

She said, "It's silly to ask, and it can't now mean anything, but did Diane ever know about"—she delicately twiddled her fingers as though to get rid of crumbs, if there were any, and looked at Edward, her eyelids wrinkled and her lashes thick with mascara—"you and me?"

Edward nodded. "She did, yes."

Hilary did another of her dips, bending her knees slightly, and said, "And so all those times I saw her, and she was as friendly as friendly could be, she knew."

"She knew."

"Why didn't you tell me she did?"

"She made me swear I wouldn't tell you. She—"

"I know, she would have been humiliated by my knowing she did and that she put up with it. I know. I know. I know."

Edward pointed to a place setting at one end of the table, and Hilary sat. Then he went into the kitchen and came out with a large wedge of game pie on a serving dish.

He ate leaning over his food, and when he drank from his glass of wine he hardly raised it off the table but leaned even farther forward. Hilary sat up straight, bringing the silver forkfuls up higher than her mouth and then lowering them, and she raised her glass almost higher than her nose each time she drank. She held her chin and bosom out.

Finally she said, "I don't think Gregory ever knew."

Edward hesitated. "I think he did."

"He told you he did?"

"Yes."

"And he told you not to tell me?"

"He did."

Hilary pressed the tips of her fingers to her eyebrows and lowered her head.

"Are you all right?" Edward asked.

She threw her hands out and raised her head and, after a deep breath, said, "I would like to say yes, that I'm all right, that you're all right— Are you all right?"

"I don't know."

"Nor do I, nor do I."

Edward got up and took the empty serving dish into the kitchen, and when he came back he found Hilary with her eyes closed. He said, "Hilary."

She opened her eyes and asked, "Please, may I spend the night?"

"Of course you may."

She got up and came to him and put her hand, which was freckled with brown spots, on one of his arms. "Go tell my driver to go and come back for me in the morning."

He did, and returned to the basement dining room, where he and Hilary sat at the table, silent again.

"I—" Hilary began, but her face went stark, and she said, "There's someone in the house, upstairs."

A flash passed through Edward.

Hilary began again: "I—" And again she stopped. She was motionless for a moment, and then, thrusting her chair so it fell backward with a bang, she stood. "There is someone upstairs," she said. "I know there is."

Edward went to the dining-room door, which led to the passage and the stairs, and he opened it, about to go up.

"No, no," Hilary said, reaching out a hand that clutched a white napkin. "You mustn't go up."

"Then what shall I do?"

Shaking the napkin, Hilary tilted her head back and laughed a strange, wild laugh; then she threw the napkin down.

Startled, Edward went around to Hilary's end of the table and set her chair upright. He said, "You must go to bed."

"Yes, yes," she said. "You're right."

As he helped her up the stairs, she leaned a little against him.

On the landing outside the room where she was to sleep, he opened an airing cupboard and took out a folded nightgown. As he handed it to her, one of the arms fell. Hilary raised the sleeve and said, "I would never have known Diane went in for such pretty nightgowns. Look at the lace around the cuff." She bit her lower lip, and, tears welling in her eyes, she smiled. "Shall I use the loo first?"

He kissed her on both cheeks and went into his bedroom and shut the door. He undressed, put on his pajamas, and lay on the bed to wait for Hilary to finish in the bathroom.

When he closed his eyes, he saw only darkness. Quickly, he opened them, and looked for a moment at the lit lamp, with a blue shade, next to his bed. He reached out and switched the lamp off, and when he closed his eyes again he saw the outline of the lamp shade, bright about the round edge, in the darkness. But it gradually faded and vanished, and once more the darkness was blank.

HE wasn't falling asleep; he was fully aware, and his awareness widened out on all sides. He opened his eyes and saw a hand appear in the darkness.

It was a young woman's hand. He saw the curve of her shoulder appear, and a cheek. He saw a nipple appear, and a breast. He saw long hair fall out of the darkness, and an exposed ear, and the smooth side of a neck. A young woman was emerging, detail by detail. He saw her navel, the soft fold below her tummy, the pubic tuft. He saw her eyes, her nose, her full-lipped mouth. She was smiling, and as she smiled she turned toward him so that her long hair swung through space. She was no one he had ever seen. ◆

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THE X FACTOR

The battle over the ramifications of a gay gene.

BY DANIEL J. KEVLES

THE Golds, in Jonathan Tolins' recent play "The Twilight of the Golds," are a Jewish couple from suburban New York with two grown children: one is a happily irresolute straight daughter; the other is a reflective gay son, whose sexuality they try to ignore. The daughter is thrilled to learn that she is pregnant, but her husband, a geneticist whose company has developed a test that screens fetuses for genetic problems, wants to be sure that their fetus is all right. To their dismay, the test reveals that the unborn child has a set of genes with a strong statistical link to homosexuality. When it becomes clear to the Gold family that the daughter is considering an abortion, only her brother is horrified. He implores her to keep the child. "You're erasing me from the world," he says.

Tolins' melodramatic vision of the near future may seem scientifically implausible, but it was inspired partly by the work of Simon LeVay, a neurobiologist who was at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, in La Jolla, California: in the summer of 1991, LeVay reported in *Science* that he had found a difference in brain structure between straight and homosexual men. When Tolins wrote his drama, no one had found a genetic link to homosexuality, but, eerily, in July, 1993, just a few months before the play opened in New York, researchers led by Dean H. Hamer, a molecular geneticist at the National Cancer Institute, in Bethesda, Maryland, reported in *Science* that they had traced a propensity for homosexuality to one or more genes on the X chromosome.

Both LeVay and Hamer landed on the front pages and the TV talk shows when their articles first appeared. Hamer was joined on "The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour" by the Reverend Louis Sheldon, the chairman of the Traditional Values Coalition and a militant foe of homosexuality, who insisted that it "is not genetic," explaining, "The body parts don't fit. I don't believe Nature would do that to the human race." But the new biology of homosexuality has caused the greatest controversy among the subjects under scrutiny, many of whom resent the idea that their sexuality needs to be explained at all.

Scientists Simon LeVay and Dean Hamer both present cases for a biology of homosexuality—but what use will be made of their findings?

DAVE MCKEAN

A number of gays hold that theories like LeVay's and Hamer's run the risk of pathologizing homosexuality, or turning it into a genetic defect. Some warn that the discovery of a gay gene will lead to prenatal screening and, ultimately, anti-gay genocide. (The pregnant sister in "Twilight of the Golds" finally aborts her fetus—and brings down the punishment of the gods, because the procedure leaves her unable to bear children.) LeVay and Hamer, in the eyes of these gay critics, are helping to transform plotlines like Tolins' from science fiction into social fact. Yet LeVay and Hamer are presumably innocent of politically sinister motives. LeVay is openly gay; and though Hamer does not discuss his sexual orientation, he is sympathetic to gay concerns. While Hamer—perhaps with the Reverend Mr. Sheldon in mind—has called it "extremely naïve" to expect that any scientific finding will eliminate homophobia, LeVay believes that biological evidence that homosexuality is innate might defuse opposition to it from religious conservatives; and Robert Bray, when he was the head of public information for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, said that LeVay's work was an effective weapon against those who think that "we don't deserve our rights because we're choosing to be the way we are."

FOR a good part of the twentieth century, research on homosexuality was conducted not by biologists but by psychiatrists and psychologists. They held that homosexual behavior was an "unnatural" condition generated during childhood by familial psychodynamics. Yet the attempted "cures"—including psychotherapy, electroshock therapy, hormone therapy, and aversion therapy—were all dismally ineffective. Most gays remained gay, a finding that suggested that homosexuality is largely immutable. In December, 1973, the American Psychiatric Association responded to such clinical evidence by removing homosexuality from its catalogue of mental disorders; gays and lesbians, it determined, were by and large satisfied with their sexual orientation and exhibited no signs of psychopathology arising directly from it.

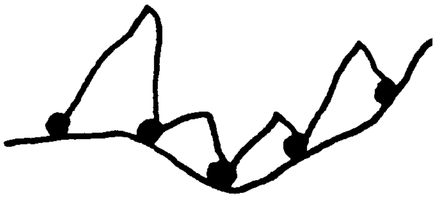
Since then, sexual orientation has drawn the attention of a small number of laboratory biologists—especially neurobiologists, like LeVay, who have concerned themselves with the development and structure of the brain, and, more recently, molecular biologists, like Hamer, whose interests lie in genetics. Until a few years ago, most of this research dealt with animals—not least because of the practical and moral obstacles that confront laboratory investigations of this sort with people. LeVay is one of the few neurobiologists who have studied sexual orientation in human beings.

Trained at Cambridge University, in his native England, and the University of Göttingen, in Germany, LeVay had spent most of his career—first at Harvard and then at the Salk Institute—working on the visual cortex. Then, in 1990, depressed after his lover of twenty years died of AIDS, LeVay found a new hold on life by applying some of his research skills to an investigation of the neuroanatomy of homosexuals. His results suggested that part of the hypothalamus—which comprises a teaspoonful of cells near the pituitary gland, at the base of the brain—has a role in sexual orientation.

In his book, "The Sexual Brain" (M.I.T. Press; $10.95 paper), LeVay explains that until recently most brain scientists, including him, had preferred to deal with the seat of cognition—the "sunny" cerebral cortex—rather than with the "dark, claustrophobic" hypothalamus, that region of the brain "haunted by animal spirits and the ghosts of primal urges." But the hypothalamus, despite its size, figures in a variety of vital functions, including sex. In the female rat, hormones acting on one subset of cells in the hypothalamus prompt her to perform lordosis, in which she raises her rear to the male to facilitate intercourse. A male rat that has been castrated ceases to mount the female, but he will try again if a minute quantity of the hormone testosterone is applied to another subset of hypothalamic cells, called the medial preoptic area. This area, in both rats and human beings, contains several concentrations of cells, each of which is termed a nucleus. Researchers at U.C.L.A. had shown that at least one such nucleus is larger, on the average, in male rats than in female ones, and also that at least one—called INAH 3, for interstitial nuclei of the anterior hypothalamus No. 3—is larger in human males. To LeVay, the animal and human anatomical evidence suggested that the medial preoptic area must be crucial to male-typical sexual behavior, and for that reason he resolved to investigate the hypothalamus in the brains of human homosexuals.

LeVay scrutinized tissue that had been taken in routine autopsies from the brains of forty-one people, among them gay men, straight men, and straight women. (The scourge of AIDS had made brain tissue from known male homosexuals considerably easier to obtain than it had been in the past, but the brains of dead women known to be lesbian were still almost impossible to come by.) What he reported in *Science* was that the volume of INAH 3 cells found in the brains of the gay men was only half that in the brains of the straight men and about the same as the volume in the women's brains. The results could be interpreted to mean that the cell group's smaller volume was responsible for the sexual orientation of the males whose brains had been analyzed—or, more generally, that male homosexuality as such might be the product of the brain's native development.

LeVay is scientifically self-critical and fluent in the social implications of his work. He freely admits that no one, including him, really knows what makes people straight or gay, but he is not surprised by evidence that male homosexuality may be innate. He was aware of his own gayness by the age of twelve, and he says that most gay men report that they recognized their homosexuality early in life. (At the time his paper appeared, he could only speculate about the neurobiology of lesbianism.) LeVay argues that if sexual orientation is somehow a function of the genetically controlled sexual differentiation that occurs at the beginning of life, it must somehow be shaped by genes.



IN the early nineteen-nineties, the search for a genetic basis of homosexuality was under way in at least three laboratories, in the United States and Canada, including that of Dean Hamer, who had been trained at Harvard in biological chemistry and had been doing genetic research for many years. Hamer notes in "The Science of Desire: The Search for the Gay Gene and the Biology of Behavior" (Simon & Schuster; $23), which he wrote with the journalist Peter Copeland, that he turned to research in the biology of sexual orientation partly for personal reasons but also because research into the genetics of human sexual behavior promised excitement and scientific payoff. A recent collaborative study by J. Michael Bailey and Richard C. Pillard that dealt in part with identical twins had found that if one brother was gay, in roughly half the cases the other was, too—a result that Hamer took to indicate that genetics might well influence sexual orientation. His book is an absorbing scientific detective story that is enriched by explanations of the pains he took to do the work right.

Most research in the genetics of human behavior, which began with the rediscovery of Mendel's laws of inheritance, in 1900, has been done wrong. The field is littered with disproved and discarded claims about genetic propensities, ranging from the ridiculous to the socially loaded. These scientific errors were products of technical shoddiness or social prejudice, or both. Even done with care and at the level of DNA, research in human behavioral genetics is plagued with difficulty. In recent years, scientists have reported finding molecular indicators of genes for manic-depression and schizophrenia, but their work has not stood up to scrutiny. To avoid some of the pitfalls of behavioral genetics, Hamer resolved to proscribe hearsay, innuendo, and ambiguity from his protocols, counting as gay only those men who from direct interviews about their sex lives, fantasies, and attractions appeared to be unambiguously homosexual. He also insisted on an approach that would produce testable predictions—one that meant looking at the DNA of his subjects. Doing so would set a precedent for research in sexual orientation.

Preliminary family evidence prompted Hamer to look at the DNA on the X chromosomes of forty pairs of gay brothers. He wanted to test whether two brothers who share a trait (in this case, homosexuality) also share a specific segment of DNA on the chromosome. If they do, the commonality of the segment implies the presence of a gene that determines—or, at least, contributes to—the trait. (The commonality must occur in significantly more than half of a population of brother pairs, since by chance two brothers will inherit the same X chromosome from their mother half the time.)

Hamer found that thirty-three of the forty gay-brother pairs shared a segment of DNA at one of the tips of the X chromosome—a tip that is designated Xq28, indicating that it is in Segment No. 28 on the q, or long, arm of the X chromosome. Hamer calculated that the likelihood that such a matching would occur merely by chance was only one in ten thousand. What Hamer reported in *Science* was that his team had established a linkage between the sexual orientation of the gay brothers and one or more of the several hundred genes estimated to reside at Xq28 with a probability greater than ninety-nine per cent. His team had not discovered a "gay gene"; it had only determined, as Hamer was careful to say, that "at least one subtype of male sexual orientation is genetically influenced."

MANY gays regard LeVay and Hamer as heroes. LeVay says that people in gay bars have offered to buy him drinks, and that lesbians have promised their brains to him for analysis. Both scientists say that they have received numerous letters from gay men and their families expressing gratitude for these findings. Many of LeVay's correspondents, some of them adolescents, declared that he had confirmed their own sense of themselves. Some said that they were sending their parents a newspaper clipping about his research, as evidence that being a gay male is not a perverse sickness. One of Hamer's correspondents wrote of the guilt he had felt about having two gay sons, since he had been told by his church that homosexuality was caused by people who lacked faith or failed to rear their children properly, and of the relief it had been to learn that homosexuality was a product of nature, beyond the control of both him and his sons.

Such no-fault reasoning has been carried into the legal arena. In several cases during recent years, the United States Supreme Court has held that a compelling state interest must be shown to justify legislation that singles out a class of people for adverse discriminatory treatment and thereby establishes what lawyers call a "suspect classification" or a "quasi-suspect classification." What is suspect is the intent of the legislating government if, for example, the people affected have historically been socially stigmatized or politically disadvantaged by reason of distinguishing characteristics, such as race, that are immutable. Gay-rights lawyers have argued that homosexuals meet all the criteria for suspect classification, including the immutability of their sexual orientation. The day that LeVay's paper was published, Richard Green, a psychiatrist and lawyer at U.C.L.A. who has written extensively on sex, science, and the law, told a newspaper reporter that the level of legal protection for homosexuals would rise "if we can demonstrate that sexual orientation is due to an inborn brain distinction."

Both Hamer's work and LeVay's were cited in the arguments by the plaintiffs in Evans v. Romer, a case filed against the 1992 voter-initiated amendment to the Colorado constitution—an amendment that prohibited the passage of any laws specifically protecting the civil rights of gays and lesbians. The local plaintiffs in the case were represented by a group of Colorado lawyers, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the Lambda Legal Defense

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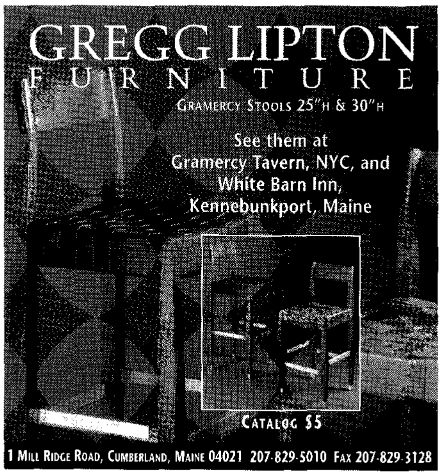

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VILLE ET VILLAGE

and Education Fund, which is the principal gay legal-action group in the country. Among other arguments, the plaintiffs urged the Colorado District Court in Denver to recognize sexual orientation as a suspect classification, and to rule that the amendment infringed on the rights of gay men and women without a compelling state interest. The witnesses on the issue of immutability included Richard Green as well as Hamer, who testified that, in his opinion, "sexual orientation is not chosen," because it consists partly of "a strong biological component and a genetic component."

In December, 1993, Judge H. Jeffrey Bayless held the Colorado amendment to be unconstitutional on the ground that it denied gays access to the political process in their own interest, but he declined to establish homosexuals as a suspect classification, partly because, by Hamer's own testimony, the relative contributions of nature and nurture to sexual orientation are unknown. Just last summer, however, Judge S. Arthur Spiegel, ruling for gay rights in a suit in federal district court against the City of Cincinnati, held that sexual orientation was at least a quasi-suspect classification and declared homosexuality to be a deep, complex, and "involuntary state of being."

Suzanne Goldberg, a graduate of Harvard Law School and now a staff attorney for the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, notes that biology had entered the Cincinnati case only incidentally. Goldberg, although she is only thirty-one, has been involved in virtually every major anti-gay-initiative case of recent years. "What's important about the Cincinnati decision is not its acknowledgment of the immutability of homosexuality," she explains, "but its recognition that differential treatment based on sexual orientation reflects nothing but prejudice—that sexual orientation is irrelevant to anyone's ability to perform in society." Six weeks ago, the Supreme Court agreed to hear an appeal of an affirmation by the Colorado Supreme Court of Judge Bayless's decision. It seems unlikely that biological arguments will be raised in any of the briefs filed by gay-rights advocates. Goldberg, who is coördinating preparation of the friend-of-the-court briefs in the case, is clearly wary of using such claims to support civil rights.

"Needs more sass."

Certainly the exploitation of biological claims in civil-rights disputes is a *limited and dangerous strategy.* To begin with, the mere fact that a disposition has a biological basis does not legitimatize it, legally or otherwise; a biological propensity for, say, altruism or violence should not make the former less admirable or the latter less reprehensible. Moreover, if the research is later proved meaningless, legal arguments built on it could fall apart.

Current theories of the biology of sexual orientation are in fact fragile and have already drawn considerable scientific dissent. Probably the best over-all critique of them is an article that was published last May, in *Scientific American.* Its author is William Byne, who specializes in psychiatry and neurobiology at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, in New York. Concerning the genetic theories, Byne points out that although roughly half the identical-twin pairs studied by Bailey and Pillard were both gay, almost half were not; and that, in any case, the twins in each set were reared in the same home environment, so distinguishing between the effects of nurture and those of nature on their sexual orientation would be all but impossible. One of the main objections to Hamer's study is that he did not examine the Xq28 region of any straight male siblings of the gay brothers; matchings with them would decidedly undercut the significance of the concordance between the gay pairs. And one of the more subtle critiques is that if a gene on Xq28 influences anything its contribution may be to the creation of a temperamental inclination for a whole spate of behaviors—including, as a geneticist friend of mine remarked facetiously, a willingness to discuss your sex life in an interview with a geneticist. A genetic link to sexual orientation may be only indirect.

Hamer says that he has replicated his results (his new findings are under prepublication review), but they have not been replicated outside his laboratory; no one has reproduced LeVay's, either—not even LeVay, who has not attempted the task. Tracing variations between gays and straights to a minute region of the hypothalamus could prove to be merely a kind of interior phrenology—an attribution of behavioral differences to different-sized bumps in the brain that might have little, if any, function in human sexual orientation. Both the animal research and the human research have been challenged at their foundation—the claim that the brains of human males and females develop differently, and the implication that gay men are, as Darrell Yates Rist, a cofounder of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, contemptuously phrased it, "hermaphrodites of sorts, sporting feminine brains in masculine bodies."

LeVay and Hamer defend themselves against some of the technical challenges vigorously, if not altogether convincingly. For example, Angela Pattatucci, one of Hamer's collaborators, who is herself gay, reported in a talk at the California Institute of Technology, in September, 1993, that one reason Hamer's group did not examine the Xq28 region of the gay brothers' straight male siblings is that those siblings might have been less than candid about their straightness: "Heterosexuality is an inherently unreliable category." Still, LeVay and Hamer readily admit that they don't know how genes influence brain development and sexual orientation, and agree that some of the technical challenges merit attention. They rightly contend that the debates can be advanced only by further inquiry into the biology of sexual orientation, which, they write in their own article in the May, 1994, issue of *Scientific American*, is warranted if only because such research "can help dispel some of the myths about homosexuality that in the past have clouded the image of lesbians and gay men." LeVay has chosen to dispel myths by leaving the Salk Institute in order to establish the Institute of Gay and Lesbian Education, in West Hollywood, which opened its doors in September, 1992, and whose aim is to provide instruction relevant to homosexuals in subjects such as literature, law, and science. Hamer, as he continues his research on Xq28, does his best to discourage biological myths, emphasizing the limits of what his group has learned, and stressing, as he declares in his book, that although sexuality is founded on genes, it "is swayed by personal history, society, and culture."

If Hamer is chary of the liberationist hopes that some have pinned to his research, he is equally impatient with the charges that he has opened a homophobic Pandora's box. At the close of his paper in *Science* he states—in a rare declaration for a scientific article—that it would be "fundamentally unethical" to use the kind of information his group has developed "to assess or alter a person's current or future sexual orientation, either heterosexual or homosexual, or other normal attributes of human behavior." In an attempt to make the statement something more than a piety, he goes on to say in his book that if his laboratory should discover a gay gene he would exercise whatever patent rights he might obtain in such a way as to prevent any technology based on his work from being used for the kind of prenatal selection dramatized in Jonathan Tolins' play.

Constitutional law already stands squarely in the way of any state-mandated abortion of "gay" fetuses, and so does the tough fabric of social values, even among homophobic social conservatives: to endorse such reproductive selection would force them into a contortion of their anti-abortion principles. The kind of discrimination that the identification of a gay gene might enable is a private one—the type embraced by the Golds—that Hamer proposes to prevent by restricting the use of his prospective patents. For all his good intentions, though, Hamer should know better. Except in extraordinary cases, the life of a patent is now only seventeen years. Besides, it is difficult to imagine the

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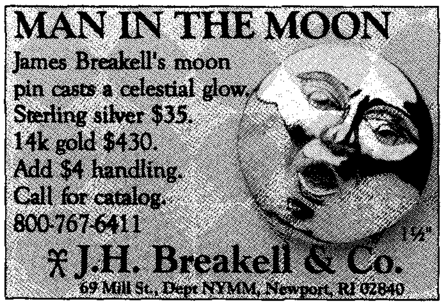

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federal government's ever allowing one of its scientific employees to file for a patent that he would use to deny the Golds of the world access to biomedical knowledge developed at public expense. The Golds might also say that they have every right to the knowledge, and that the Hamers of the world have no right to interfere in their reproductive lives.

The Golds would have a point. So would gays and lesbians who conceive children by artificial insemination and would prefer to bring to term only those *with* a genetic predisposition to gayness. Gay objections to the abortion of fetuses likely to be gay echo protests from other quarters that prenatal diagnosis for such genetically grounded diseases as sickle-cell anemia or cystic fibrosis stigmatizes the living who suffer from them. Yet American constitutional law says nothing about why people may choose to abort. Their reasons may be morally endorsable, or they may be morally deplorable. If the right to choice is to have meaning, it cannot be diluted, however painful some may find the purposes for which others may exercise that choice. A truly tolerant society will hold these uneasy contradictions of principle in discerning balance, allowing people like the Golds the freedom to abort a gay child while also insisting that gay men and women have a right to be treated like all other men and women, with dignity and respect. Although biological explanations of sexual orientation may provide gays with a sense of self-affirmation, it is hazardous to forget that science has always been an unreliable ally of civil rights. The advent of gay biology compels us once again to recognize that our conception of human equality, in love or in law, derives not from our biology but from our principles. ♦

GROWING UP IS HARD TO DO

Alienation Tokyo style, in a new collection of stories.

BY CATHLEEN SCHINE

Banana Yoshimoto

CHRIS CURRY

BANANA YOSHIMOTO'S first collection of short fiction gently examines the stunned, innocent egotism of youth hurtling toward maturity. Like Yoshimoto's two novels, "N.P." and the immensely popular "Kitchen," "Lizard" (Grove; $18), translated from the Japanese by Ann Sherif, follows a series of earnest twenty-somethings in the big city. Written in a seemingly unambitious prose, these stories float just beyond monotony's reach, but beyond it they are—quick and delicate, building, one after another, in a gentle crescendo of understanding and intensity. A sure and lyrical writer who is unembarrassed by adolescent funk, Yoshimoto transforms the trite into the essential. This is her odd and charming art.

The pattern of each of the six tales in this slender volume is almost identical. Newlyweds, aerobics instructors, writers, office workers—Yoshimoto's young men and women come to Tokyo nursing childhood unhappiness and looking for answers. What they find is more confusion. They generally fall in love, in a resigned, distant sort of way, and they find that more confusing still. "We just sat together in the dark, licking each other's wounds," one typical character says, thinking about his unhappy girlfriend with the lizard tattoo, "and clinging together for warmth, like an old couple." But then there comes a moment of sensuous appreciation, like a casual miracle—a sudden, intense perception of beauty. And at last these disaffected characters are able to embrace life, with all its limitations and possibilities.

Yoshimoto is unapologetic about her self-dramatizing protagonists, and her vision is as easily apocalyptic as a rock video, yet she never sinks into pop culture's posturing narcissism. If Yoshimoto's characters suffer like the most conventional of post-adolescent heroes, there is always a sense that other people have lives, too, and other people have suffered—even parents. The children appropriate their parents' troubles, of course; they see childhood as a brand, like the lizard tattoo, a mark which they must carry into adulthood. But their unhappiness does not, finally, close them off. The angst of the modern hero, from Kafka to the American banging-screen-door school of anomie, is nowhere to be found in these stories. Peering out a train window, looking up at the sky, or breathing in the scent of Korean pickles, Yoshimoto's self-absorbed young people come to understand that we are all caught, together, in a web of history and of promise.

"A Strange Tale from Down by the River," the last and most satisfying story in the collection, and the one to which all the others seem to lead, is about Akemi, an amusing, ingenuous young woman who left an upper-middle-class home and took up sex as a hobby, sleeping with men or women, or groups of both. Now reformed, she is engaged to a rich and prominent young man living in an elegant apartment on the river. As she begins to understand her parents' troubled marriage, her own childhood, and the compromises that life consists of, the river flows implacably beneath the windows, "like the passage of time."

In Yoshimoto's work, platitudes function, for both the characters and the reader, as a soothing mechanism that links people to one another and to the world. "There's nothing for us to hold on to," says a young woman who is afraid that her married boyfriend will now cheat on her as well, "no one we can keep forever as our own. Our souls are simply floating, anyway, waiting to be swept along with the current." The language of "Lizard" drifts regularly into cliché, but Yoshimoto recognizes the power behind these shopworn words—the truths that made them so familiar in the first place. "You know this feeling, don't you?" she seems to say.

Thematically and formally, these stories are as alike as fairy tales. And, as in fairy tales, their heroes and heroines are rescued in the end. In "Dreaming of Kimchee," the young woman who has stolen her man from his wife is finally released from guilt when the ex-wife remarries: "A fresh breeze would come to sweep through me, cleansing me. And when I opened my eyes at dawn, I'd feel a glow, a radiant white pearl." In "Blood and Water," a girl who leaves a religious community for the lure of the city discovers what it means to be alone: "I am my own home, and this is where I belong, and things keep going forward, endlessly, just as the blue of the sky before the dawn soon turns into a bright sunrise, each with its own beauty. That kind of thing."

When Akemi considers her earlier days of wild sex, she thinks, "I had left the group, as a piece of ripe fruit falls from a tree and is swept away by the current of the river, and finally finds its proper place." "Lizard" is about this need to find one's proper place—to grow up. Healers and religious fanatics, artists and businessmen, philanderers, unhappy housewives, and bored orgiasts all float by on Yoshimoto's current, "bummed," "stressed out," and otherwise enmeshed in an international youth culture. Yoshimoto uses the same shallow language and enormous emotion that fuel rock music, but she is not limited by them. She finds a way out for her characters, a way into the world. And she doesn't rely on the cold, ironic distance that has been so fashionable in short fiction in recent years. Yoshimoto's descriptions of Gen-X girls and boys aimlessly sipping tea and watching TV are earnest, deep, and unaffected; they read more like diary entries or a soldier's letters home than short stories. It is Yoshimoto's gift to be able to recognize that the great questions of life are as real as a flavor, a curse, or a headache. ♦

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RECOMMENDED READING

Felicia's Journey
by William Trevor
(Viking; $21.95)

When handsome Johnny Lysaght, home from England to visit his mother, first catches sight of Felicia, she is standing outside Hickey's Hotel in a bridesmaid's dress. When the famously fat and affable Mr. Hilditch first catches sight of her, a few months later, she is pregnant and desperate, asking for directions outside a Midlands factory, with her grandmother's stolen pension money stuffed in her plastic carrier bag. Hilditch can tell at a glance that the Irish girl needs a special friend—just as the others did. The insignificance of Felicia's ever-narrowing life is challenged by our terror that she will lose it.

Open Water
by Maria Flook
(Pantheon; $24)

With a mixture of high poetic seriousness and a ribald, picaresque sensibility, Flook's second novel tells the story of Willis Pratt, the hapless, morphine-addicted stepson of a sea-widowed woman who is dying of cancer. The setting is coastal Rhode Island, a place where humanity seems to have gone brackish, but beyond which lies the purifying ocean. Flook has fashioned a beautiful book out of the unlikeliest elements.

Slaughterhouse
by David Rieff
(Simon & Schuster; $22)

This account of the war in Bosnia is a grim work of ethical reporting at the very highest level—a study of "liberals faced by totalitarians" which also chronicles the moral shame of the West. "After two years in Bosnia," Rieff writes, "I am disposed to think that had there been cameras in Auschwitz, the world might very well have done as little as it did in that pretelevision age, unless, of course, it had suited the people who have power in the world to act."

Bystander: A History of Street Photography
by Colin Westerbeck
and Joel Meyerowitz
(Bulfinch; $60)

This book tracks photography's most significant and most inchoate genre, which began a century ago, when Parisian flaneurs brought their cameras into the avenues and blurred the distinctions between amateur and professional, artist and hack. The authors arrange a slew of anecdotes, ideas, and prints around the pantheon of Atget, Cartier-Bresson, Evans, and Frank. Such giants, however, do not obscure the countless other practitioners strolling these pages, like young Jacques-Henri Lartigue, in whose adolescent diaries the word "click!" resonates with talismanic power.

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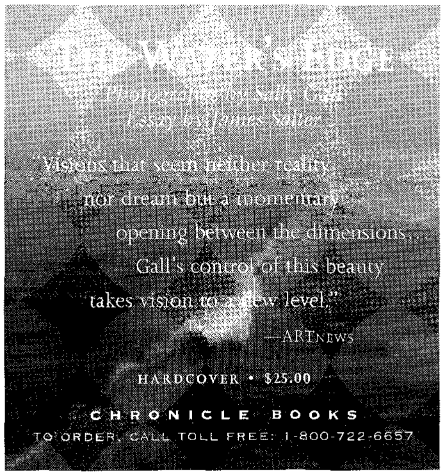

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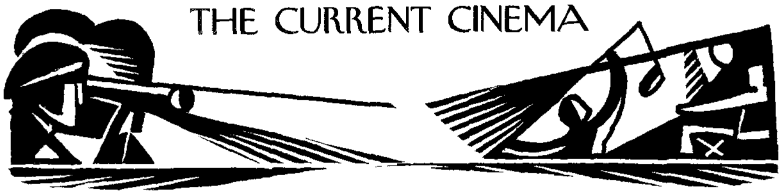

THE CURRENT CINEMA

UNDER A CLOUD

A story from Stephen King, and a Czech filmmaker's coming-of-age saga.

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

THE title character of Taylor Hackford's "Dolores Claiborne" is a middle-aged housekeeper who lives on a tiny, sparsely populated island off the coast of Maine, and the movie's visual style is superbly suited to both the heroine and the setting. The sky is gray and chilly-looking; it creates a mood that has less to do with foreboding than with regret and lowered expectations, and Dolores (Kathy Bates), a lifelong resident of the island, is obviously a woman who has learned to stop hoping for clear, sunny days. The film is based on a 1992 Stephen King novel that is one of the horror writer's periodic attempts to explore the terrors of everyday existence, without recourse to the supernatural. The book—a long, rambling monologue in which the heroine, whom the police suspect of murdering her wealthy employer, takes the opportunity to account for her whole life and to explain her role in the suspicious death of her husband, years before—is lurid and lively, but its underlying tone is melancholy. The combative, illusionless persona that Dolores presents to the world betrays a bitter kind of self-knowledge, an awareness that under the pressure of circumstances she has become someone she never wanted to be. "Sometimes being a bitch is all a woman has to hold on to" is her motto, both in the book and in the movie, and that remarkably sad statement echoes in our heads as we watch her story unfold. It's the practical wisdom of a perpetually clouded spirit.

King's novel isn't ideal movie material. It's the most stubbornly literary of his books, lurching back and forth in time on the waves of the narrator's unruly emotions: instead of speeding us, in his usual manner, from Point A to Point B, he puts us in a life raft with a garrulous survivor and forces us to listen to what she has to say for herself. The movie's aim is to give us a smoother ride, and, in a sense, it succeeds. Hackford and the screenwriter, Tony Gilroy, have reinforced the story's structure to make it a sturdier vehicle of conventional dramatic tension. They give the heroine a nemesis—an obsessive cop named Mackey (Christopher Plummer, hamming it up), who is convinced that she killed both her boss and her husband, and pursues her like the hound of heaven. And they beef up Dolores's relationship with her estranged daughter, Selena (Jennifer Jason Leigh). In the novel, Selena appears only in flashbacks; the movie inserts her in the present, so she and her mother can bicker, circle each other warily, and inch toward reconciliation. These plot enhancers do their job, which is to keep the story moving forward, but the pace is too even and the course is predictable; we're lulled, not excited. As the movie grinds to the end of its two-hour-and-eleven-minute running time, we begin to feel

Toughing it out: Kathy Bates and Jennifer Jason Leigh in "Dolores Claiborne."

ALICIA CZECHOWSKI

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EASTER SUNDAY, 1955

Why should anything go wrong in our bodies?
Why should we not be all beautiful? Why should
there be decay?—why death?—and, oh, why, damnation?
—*Anthony Trollope, in a letter.*

What were we? What have we become?
Light fills the picture, the rising sun,
the three of us advancing, dreamlike,
up the steps of my grandparents' house on Oak Street.
My mother and father, still young, swing me
lightly up the steps, as if I weighed nothing.
From the shadows, my brother and sister watch,
wanting their turn, years away from being born.
Now my aunts and uncles and cousins
gather on the shaded porch of generation,
big enough for everyone. No one has died yet.
No vows have been broken. No words spoken
that can never be taken back, never forgotten.
I have a basket of eggs my mother and I dyed yesterday.
I ask my grandmother to choose one, just one,
and she takes me up—O hold me close!—
her cancer not yet diagnosed. I bury my face
in soft flesh, the soft folds of her Easter dress,
breathing her in, wanting to stay forever where I am.
Her death will be long and slow, she will beg
to be let go, and I will find myself, too quickly,
in the here-and-now moment of my fortieth year.
It's spring again. Easter. Now my daughter steps
into the light, her basket of eggs bright, so bright.
One, choose one, I hear her say, her face upturned
to mine, innocent of outcome. Beautiful child,
how thoughtlessly we enter the world!
How free we are, how bound, put here in love's name
—death's, too—to be happy if we can.

—Elizabeth Spires

---

about it the way Dolores feels about her life: that it looked good for a while and then somehow went terribly wrong.

This is particularly frustrating because the picture's opening half hour or so is unusually promising. The dark-toned cinematography (by Gabriel Beristain) and Kathy Bates's subtly compelling performance generate a sense of anticipation—the possibility that the movie might really be able to show us something about how an ordinary woman endures bad weather and bad choices. And Hackford's handling of the flashbacks is fluid and persuasive: figures from Dolores's past materialize like ghosts out of the worn landscapes and neglected rooms of the present, and then step from the shadows to play their scenes in the bright, unforgiving light of the heroine's memory. The elements that at first make the picture seem so distinctive continue to give pleasure throughout, but they're gradually overwhelmed by the banality of the tidy dramatic structure. Despite the filmmakers' earnest efforts to whip up narrative momentum by focussing on Dolores's conflicts with Mackey and Selena, the movie's present-tense melodrama only increases our impatience to get back to the past, where the heroine's struggles, paradoxically, seem to have greater immediacy.

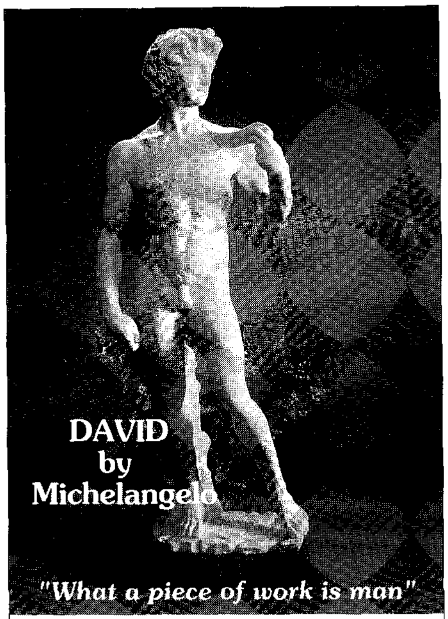
The strange urgency of the flashback sequences is due largely to a couple of terrific actors. David Strathairn plays Dolores's husband, Joe, a wiry, narrow-eyed bully, and he's brilliantly loathsome. Ellen Muth, as thirteen-year-old Selena, creates a devastating portrait of an unhappy child. The hooded, evasive misery she evokes is far more eloquent than the monotonous sullenness of Leigh's adult Selena. The relationship between Dolores and her daughter, who has grown up to become a hot-shot magazine writer, is supposed to be the emotional core of the movie, but the adult Selena is such a vacuous stereotype of the neurotic New York career woman, medicating her sick soul with booze, pills, and cigarettes, that the character functions as a kind of narrative black hole, sucking the energy out of the story. For the third movie in a row, Leigh is playing a writer with an abrasive personality ("The Hudsucker Proxy" and "Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle" were the previous installments of this peculiar trilogy), and here she bears down on the part with a morose intensity that makes her performance almost unwatchable. The gloom she shrouds herself in is unrelieved and, in the end, perfectly opaque.

The movie's conception of Selena, along with Leigh's grim, dogged acting, has the effect of coloring the story with an emotion that King scrupulously avoided in the novel—self-pity. The purpose of "Dolores Claiborne" is, in a sense, to vindicate the bitches of the world: King wants us to understand, and to respect, the sort of female courage that sometimes finds expression in unpleasant behavior. The movie's Dolores is as bracingly unapologetic as she is in the novel, but the presence of a whining, petulant daughter undermines King's most interesting idea: that women's suffering doesn't have to turn them into victims, and that there's something heroic about the hard shells they develop to protect themselves from a hostile environment. Dolores's unfussy middle-aged toughness, which Bates captures precisely, is surprisingly stirring. It's fun to watch her take her stand, and you don't want to see her sink into the spongy ground of her daughter's self-nurtured despair. Turning "Dolores Claiborne" into a warm mother-daughter soap opera robs it of the cold beauty that is its most striking feature. Hackford and Gilroy do what they think they have to do—working, perhaps, on the theory that sometimes being a pop psychologist is all a filmmaker has to hold on to. In "Dolores Claiborne" they might have had a lot more than that; there may be wisdom in resignation, but there's also such a thing as giving up too easily.

MARTHA (Marianne Sägebrecht), the heroine of Jiři Weiss's "Martha and I," is, like Dolores Claiborne, a middle-aged domestic worker who seems to be carrying the weight of the world on her broad, sturdy back. The film is a very different sort of celebration of female courage, though: it's quiet, patient, and resolutely unsentimental. Weiss, an octogenarian Czech filmmaker who has lived in the United States since 1969, tells a story that's based on his own memories of the dark years leading up to the Second World War, and tells it in a style that takes us back to a time before another, more recent catastrophe: in its leisurely, sensual, tragicomic manner, "Martha and I" evokes Czech cinema in the brief period of freedom that preceded the Soviet crackdown of 1968. The "I" of the movie, who narrates in voice-over, is a Jewish teen-ager named Emil (played first by Václav Chalupa and later by Ondřej Vetchý), who when the tale begins, in 1935, is a gangly, randy kid whose sexual curiosity keeps getting him into trouble. After being caught stalking a blond classmate and groping the maid, Emil is dispatched from his Prague apartment, where he lives with his nervous mother, to the home of his Uncle Ernst (Michel Piccoli), in a town on the German border. There, Emil's mother believes, the boy won't be corrupted by the help: Ernst's lone servant is a large, placid, sturdy German woman—Martha.

From that point on, Emil becomes primarily an observer, and our attention shifts to the amorous intrigues of his uncle's household. Ernst, an obstetrician (who occasionally performs abortions), is a charming old goat married to a woman who appears to be a good thirty years younger than he is. He enters the movie with a big, satisfied grin on his face and with his wife's white turban on his head—playing the fool, but with winning aplomb. He looks as if he were splashing around in the Fountain of Youth, and it's impossible to begrudge him his joy. His wife—the fountain he splashes in—proves to be unfaithful, though. Returned to reality from his sexual idyll, Ernst begins to appreciate the soberer, more mature virtues of Martha, and, to the horror of everyone in his family but Emil, marries her. (His affections, like Emil's, are blind to class distinctions.) As Emil grows up, he watches his uncle's second, solider union collapse, too, as if it were as unsustainable as the hopeful erotic fantasy of the first marriage. This time, it's the world that is treacherous: the Nazis annex the Sudetenland and relocate Ernst in a cramped apartment in Prague.

Martha goes with him, standing by her man despite her family's insistence that she ditch him and despite Ernst's pleas for her to save herself. In the second half of "Martha and I," the mood turns sombre, but Weiss is such a graceful storyteller that the transition doesn't feel jarring or arbitrary. Although this is an unusual story, the strength of the movie is, in a way, its familiarity. By adopting a teen-ager's perspective, Weiss, who must have been nearly ten years older than his stand-in, Emil, places his film in a Czech tradition of wartime coming-of-age sagas, like Jiři Menzel's 1966 film "Closely Watched Trains" and Josef Skvorecký's classic novella "The Bass Saxophone." The conventions of the genre—which are based on the ironic counterpoint of ardent youthful spirits and the sad spectacle of the Old World dying in rage and despair—are reliable and, in the hands of a veteran like Weiss, still expressive. The vigor of this approach lies in a kind of heightened awareness, an alertness to small, acute sensations. In "Martha and I," Weiss looks back on his experience with both the enthusiasm of a boy and the tough-minded assurance of an old man. His sensibility comes through most clearly not in his depiction of Martha, or even of Emil, but in the character of Ernst. Piccoli's extraordinary performance is the soul of the movie. The gleam of lechery never quite goes out of his eyes, even in the direst of circumstances, and by the end of the movie that gleam seems to reflect everything that the director has stubbornly continued to believe in—the remembered sweetness of life before the war, the exhilarating sense of artistic possibility in Dubček-era Czechoslovakia. It's the look of a touching faith that paradises can somehow be regained. ◆



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ON TELEVISION

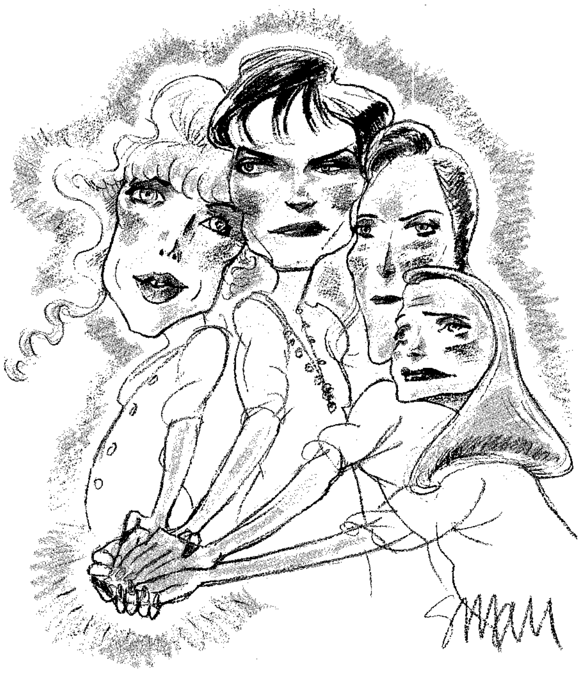
SOB SISTERS

A dreamy prime-time soap with a few new kinks.

BY JAMES WOLCOTT

CERTAIN shows offer preening opportunities. To be a fan of upper-middlebrow brain massagers like "The X-Files," "Frasier," "E.R.," and "NYPD Blue"—not to mention valiant efforts on the verge of cancellation like "Homicide" and "My So-Called Life"—is a sign of choosiness. It means that you don't just prop yourself in front of the TV like a passive lump but actively schedule your viewing around a magnetic draw. (In the trade, these programs are known as "appointment shows.") However, the gap between upper middlebrow and middlebrow is wider than it looks, and programs that fall short of pop-cult flair find themselves without cachet. They aren't square enough to be kitsch ("The Brady Bunch" series), or clever enough to be campy ("The Brady Bunch Movie"). What they do have is heart, miles and miles of heart. One of them is "Sisters," now in its fifth season on NBC. To confess to watching it is the first step in overcoming shame.

"Sisters," created by Ron Cowen and Daniel Lipman, who wrote the Emmy Award-winning AIDS telefilm "An Early Frost," is a "serial drama"—i.e., a prime-time soap—with a large and growing young-female demographic, which partly explains its lack of chic. Since "Sisters" is broadcast on Saturday night, its audience is widely held to be composed mostly of women without dates. Those addicted to the show are suspected of not having a life (or, at least, a romantic life). Hence "Sisters" serves as an unofficial lonely-hearts club. It has earned its audience's allegiance by tapping into their vicarious longing for romance and domesticity and mirroring it on an idealized plane. Set in Winnetka, Illinois, the show is both materialistic and ethereal—a soft-focus vision of suburbia, in which the Waspy characters seem planted in a terrarium. Plastic leaves flicker in the artificial sun. It's as if Martha Stewart had started a colony on the moon.



The original "Sisters": Julianne Phillips, Sela Ward, Patricia Kalember, and Swoosie Kurtz.

In the early episodes, the show would open with the sisters unwinding in a steam bath, as if we were going to be intimately eavesdropping on female trade secrets. (A racy discussion of orgasms was censored by the network.)

DAVID SMALL

As in Robert Altman's "Three Women," which also made heavy use of water imagery, the four sisters seemed to embody phases of the eternal female, their separate identities mingling in one fertile pool. One of the show's gimmicks is that the sisters all have boys' names, given them by their father, a doctor, now deceased. There's Alex (Swoosie Kurtz), Teddy (Sela Ward), Frankie (Julianne Phillips, who left the series during this season), and Georgie (Patricia Kalember). Kalember's presence is key: fans of "thirtysomething" will remember her as Susannah, the cranky girlfriend of Peter Horton's Gary (he of the Peter Pan syndrome), and her link to "thirtysomething" establishes the show's pedigree. "Sisters" has assumed the mantle of the baby boomer's guide to muted angst—a modulated moan at the encroachment of middle age.

As on "thirtysomething," reality and fantasy, past and present chase each other in a yin-yang circle. The show is staged like a mental swirl. When the sisters eat ice cream at the local hangout, actresses playing their teen-age selves caper in the background. At the mention of their dead father, we glimpse the kindly old practitioner pulling out his stethoscope, a phantom patriarch from a "Father Knows Best" past. (The producers call these moments "thinkbacks.") Although "Sisters" approximates "thirtysomething" 's visual texture, its sensibility is thinner. On "thirtysomething," the qualms beneath the marriage woes and mortgage worries seemed existential, a basement door opening on mortality; on "Sisters," there's no personal or social ill that can't be soothed with a group hug. The series even has its own Daddy Warbucks, in the person of Alex's husband, Big Al, who's a lovable-buffoon businessman played with an eerie slump by the comedian Robert Klein. To the viewer, he looks depressed, but none of the sisters seem to notice—they're too busy "being there" for one another. He insists on referring to Alex as Little Al—maybe the worst indignity Swoosie Kurtz has ever endured as an actress. She deserves a dog bone for the adoring looks she gives him.

The show blows so many bubbles of psychobabble—the sisters are always "validating" one another's experiences—that it was a welcome relief this season when a seductive shrink appeared on the scene: as a villain, Dr. Caspian, played by Kalember's real-life husband, Daniel Gerroll, was a slick opportunist with long symphony-composer hair and a closetful of expensive shirts. His hypnotic eyes seemed capable of peeling a banana as he coaxed his female patients out of their clothes while hardly moving from his chair. Enunciating his words in little bites, Dr. Caspian would refer to his lovemaking sessions on the couch as "our work"—as in "I thought our work was important" (translation: Undo the top button), and "We're making such progress in our work it would be a pity to stop now" (translation: Your zipper seems stuck). Gerroll attacked the part with such slithery mendacity that he made the soppy sincerities of most of the cast seem like cream filling. Georgie, seduced and abandoned, went half crazy-mad with hysteria and began hounding him. Catching him dining at a restaurant with another woman, she made a pathetic spectacle of herself, pounding on the window in the rain and calling his name: it was all too wonderful.

The other great hoot of this season was a takeoff on tabloid TV in which the euthanasia of an Alzheimer's victim, arranged as a tender act of mercy by Alex (the lump in her throat was as big as her head), landed her in court as a murder defendant. Dubbed the Angel of Death, Alex watched in bug-eyed horror as a show called "Hard Edition" portrayed her as a femme fatale funnelling pills down the old boy's throat while he feebly protested and gasped for air. Kurtz's dropped-jaw reaction shots as she watched the footage reminded us of the comic actress she can be. The show does have its moments of media savvy.

But if the bulletin boards of the on-line services are any gauge, these high points have not quelled restlessness in the ranks. Scrolling through the "Sisters" forums on CompuServe and America Online turns up a lot of dissatisfied devotees. Although "Sisters" has been renewed for a sixth season, many fans feel that it has lost its way, as it has slipped from realistic drama to romance novel. They deplore the preposterous Teddy-sleeps-with-a-drug-lord-to-nail-her-husband's-killer story line and the preposterous Frankie-manages-a-hunky-boxer story line, which have dovetailed into a single plot hook. As one person posted on America Online, "That's it, this show has gotten way too weird for even me. NO family is this dysfunctional." Another A.O.L. poster agreed, complaining, "They started out as a family with a few problems, but the problems have escalated into outerspace." Some remarked on how unlucky in love the sisters have become, citing as precedent the Cartwright curse on "Bonanza." (Tragedy befell any woman the Cartwright men dragged down the aisle.) But one stalwart admitted, "I'll watch no matter how bad this show gets." That defeatist attitude is what has helped keep "Saturday Night Live" on for the last few years. It also typifies the low-grade narcotic hold of "Sisters." Serious bad things happen on the show—alcoholism and breast cancer, divorce and death—yet nothing impedes its dreamy passage. Its fans are simply asking for it to be a more reliable drug.

An interesting addition was made this season when Jo Anderson joined the regular cast as Charley (she assumes the spot in the lineup vacated by Julianne Phillips), a half sister who had been raised apart and didn't enjoy the cozy childhood of her siblings. Tense and withheld, Anderson has an edgy bodily presence; Charley's scenes with Dr. Caspian, where she pretended to be a sexually repressed patient to get the goods on his unprofessional conduct, had a palpable excitement and unease. At times, she seems like a real person onscreen. In the context of "Sisters," this will never do. ♦

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[*From the Orlando Sentinel*]

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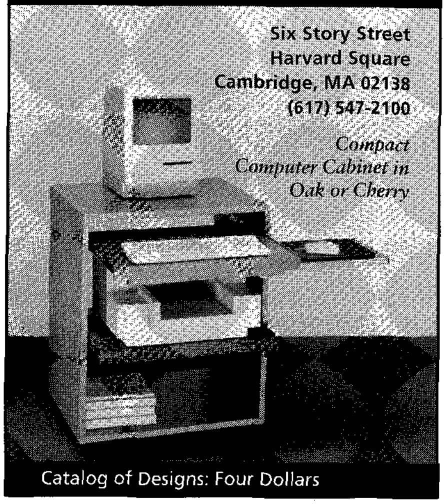

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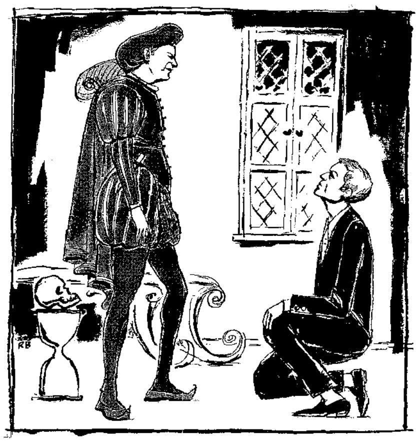
"Don Juan in Chicago" and "Translations."

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

WATCHING the six short sketches in David Ives's "All in the Timing," the big Off Broadway hit of 1994, was like going on a joyride inside the author's head. Although a couple of the sketches were merely satisfying (which is not nothing), three or four of them provided such a gratifying rush of pleasure that you wanted to cry out "Again!," like a child who has just been swung around the room. The production, under the direction of Jason McConnell Buzas, was brisk, and the actors—especially Robert Stanton and Nancy Opel—were perfectly in tune with the overabundant inventiveness of the writing. Ives's brilliant wordplay was ideally suited to the short form—there was a steady *ping!* of steel-tipped comic arrows hitting one bull's-eye after another.



Peter Bartlett and Simon Brooking in "Don Juan in Chicago."

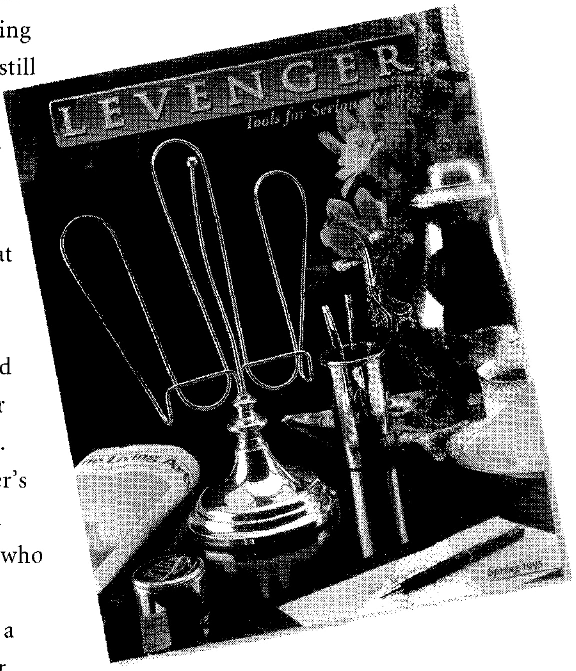
The call for more David Ives has now been answered, with the full-length "Don Juan in Chicago," at Primary Stages (where "All in the Timing," which is now at the Houseman, originated), but this time the effect is of too much of a not good enough thing. Ives's Don Juan, a cinquecento nerdy-mad-scientist type, played by Simon Brooking, makes a deal with the Devil: he gets to live forever, but only if he sleeps with a different woman every night. Needless to say, the obligation to perform soon outweighs the pleasure, and you can't help wondering if David Ives is suffering from a similar degree of pressure to perform: last year he was, God help him, compared to Beckett, Ionesco, Pinter, and Stoppard, which could make it hard for a fellow to put pen to paper, not to mention write a funny play. In "Don Juan," Ives's ear for crackpot coinages ("Instamatico, Signore") and mischievously off-key rhymes ("cosmos is/osmosis," "mantra/Cleopantra") is as good as ever, but the play, loaded down with creaky plot devices and stereotyped characters, creeps along at an old nag's pace. Some of the finest comic talent in the city is on display—or, rather, is thrown away—here: Peter Bartlett, who is a treasure (his signature expression is a delicious simulation of put-upon obsequiousness, achieved by smiling and frowning at the same time), turns out to be a tepid Mephistopheles; J. Smith Cameron, who was responsible for the few moments of inspired inanity in Paul Rudnick's "The Naked Truth," fails to shine as Dona Elvira; Nancy Opel, who was so sharp in "All in the Timing," is shrill as a woman rejected by the Don (he'd already slept with her); and Robert Stanton, who was boyishly touching and funny in "All in the Timing," is unfortunately missing in action, having temporarily traded in his actor's wings in order to direct this clunky creation.

For better or worse, the heavy hitters of absurdity won't be invoked this time around, and that's probably fine with David Ives, who never sought the comparisons that were thrust on him when "All in the Timing" opened. He has said, "I'm just trying to make good jokes," and there's no doubt that he will,

ROXANNA BIKADOROFF

but he hasn't done it here. If you didn't know who wrote this play, you might find yourself saying, "Well, he's no David Ives."

BRIAN FRIEL'S 1980 play "Translations" gives you a lot to think about, but that's one of its problems—at least, in the current revival at the Plymouth, which has an impact that is educational rather than dramatic. "Translations" takes place in the fictional Donegal town of Ballybeg, where Friel has set a number of his plays, and the central concern of this one is conveniently illustrated on the cover of the program: a drawing of a signpost at a crossroads shows one sign with the Irish spelling, "Baile Beag," pointing one way, and another sign, with the English spelling, pointing in a different direction. It is 1833, and British engineers and cartographers have come to prepare a new map of Ireland, replacing Irish place-names with English ones. A parallel theme involves the impending arrival of national schools, where tuition will be free, attendance will be compulsory, and English will be the language of instruction. The action is centered in a local hedge school, whose students are a motley collection of rural types ranging from the foolish to the salty—precious flowers who will be crushed by the big foot of imperialism. The characters are themselves like signposts pointing to the issues at stake: the blustery schoolmaster (Brian Dennehy); his two sons, the loyal, stay-at-home Manus (Rob Campbell) and the canny, self-interested Owen (Rufus Sewell); the British soldier who falls in love with what the Irish language stands for (Michael Cumpsty); the local girl who embraces change (Dana Delany); the mute pupil (Amelia Campbell); and the unworldly Greek and Latin scholar (Donal Donnelly). Howard Davies, who directed, has cooked up an undifferentiated Irish stew—none of the actors or the issues have any real life or particularity. (And it must be mentioned that Dana Delany's accent is a mess.) Friel has written that "the play has to do with language and only language," an assessment that is either overly modest or slightly disingenuous: there's much here about history, politics, love, and families. In any case, the most vivid element of this production isn't the words—it's that beautiful and beckoning gray Irish sky in the background. ♦



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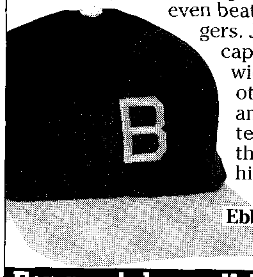

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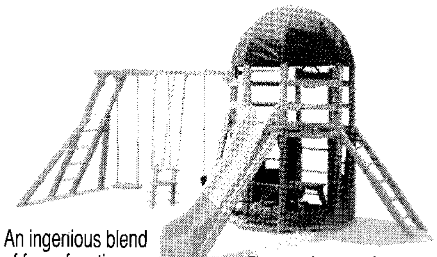

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BY FRANK GANNON

“Now to present the award for Best Performance by an Actor Playing the Role of a Person Whose Race Is Way Different from the Actor’s, here’s a man who writes the checks that make the whole world smile and a woman who obviously isn’t that interested in economics as an academic discipline—Alan Greenspan and Carol Channing.”

“Hello, Carol.”

“Hello, Alan.”

“It’s so nice to have you back where you belong.”

“Forget it, Alan.”

“The nominees are: Marlon Brando as just another guy from Taiwan in ‘Teahouse of the August Moon’; Sean Connery as a Japanese ninja-cum-fisherman in ‘You Only Live Twice’; and Shirley MacLaine in ‘My Geisha.’ ”

“And the winner is . . . Marlon Brando!”

“Accepting the award for Mr. Brando is Martha Stewart.”

“Thank you. Thank you. I’m sure that Marlon Brando, were he here, would make a little joke of a self-deprecating nature, and generally be pleasant to everyone.”

“Presenting the award for Best Actor in a Film About Jesus Christ, a man who knows whereof he speaks and a woman who knows what it’s like to walk on water—Charlton Heston and Cindy Crawford.”

“Shall we skip the repartee, Cindy?”

“All right, Chuck.”

“The nominees for Best Actor in a Film About Jesus Christ are: Harvey Keitel as Judas in Martin Scorsese’s ‘The Last Temptation of Christ’; Claudette Colbert as Poppaea in ‘The Sign of the Cross’; and John Wayne as the Roman soldier in ‘The Greatest Story Ever Told.’ ”

“Shall I open it, Cindy?”

“No, let me.”

“All right, go ahead.”

“The winner of the award for Best Actor in a Movie About Jesus Christ is . . . John Wayne!”

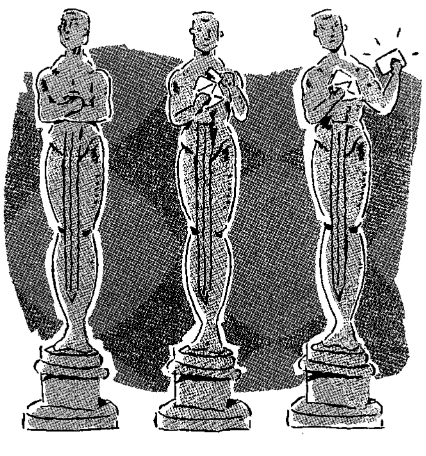
“Accepting the award for Mr. Wayne is Frank Sinatra.”

“Thank you. Thank you. No, please. All right. I’m sure that John Wayne would be thrilled if he were alive. He might even say, ‘Well, thanks a lot, Pilgrim.’ Thanks again.”

“And now to present the award for Best Performance by an Actor Playing a Famous Person Who Doesn’t Look Anything Remotely Like Him, please welcome a man who knows what the normal American wants and a woman who *is* what the normal American wants—Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and Claudia Schiffer.”

“Claudia, I couldn’t help noticing your accent. You’re not an American, am I right?”

“Very insightful, Newt. The nominees for Best Performance by an Actor Playing a Famous Person Who Doesn’t Look Anything Remotely Like Him are: Gérard Depardieu as Christopher Columbus in ‘1492’; Willem Dafoe as T. S. Eliot in ‘Tom & Viv’; Desi Arnaz, Jr., playing Desi Arnaz, Sr., in ‘The Mambo Kings’; and Diana Ross as Billie Holiday in ‘Lady Sings the Blues.’ And the winner is . . . Gérard Depardieu!”



“Accepting the award for Mr. Depardieu is Larry King.”

“Thank you. Thank you. I’m sorry Gérard can’t be here today. He told me earlier to say *bonjour*. But if he were here I think he’d say, ‘Thanks a lot, you all look beautiful.’ Or something like that. This is Larry King saying, ‘So long.’ ”

“Here now to present the award for Best Performance by an Actor Playing a Real Grouchy Guy, two people who are no strangers to controversy, ex-Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders and Sonny Bono!”

“I don’t know why people are laughing, Joycelyn, but I’m not going to say anything.”

“Good idea, Senator.”

“Congressman.”

“Whatever. The nominees for Best Performance by an Actor Playing a Real Grouchy Guy are: Linda Hunt as Billy Kwan in ‘The Year of Living Dangerously’; Robert De Niro as Al Capone in ‘The Untouchables’; the entire cast of ‘Unforgiven’; and Marlon Brando in ‘Apocalypse Now.’ ”

“And the winner is . . . Marlon Brando!”

“Accepting the award for Mr. Brando is Mario Cuomo.”

“Thank you, thank you. Thanks. You know, when Marlon called me up and asked me to accept this for him if he won, he asked me if I could fit it into my schedule. I said, ‘Marlon, read the paper. I could fit *you* into my schedule.’ Anyway, if Marlon Brando were here I know he would look out at everybody and say, ‘I coulda been a con*tend*-uh.’ ” ◆

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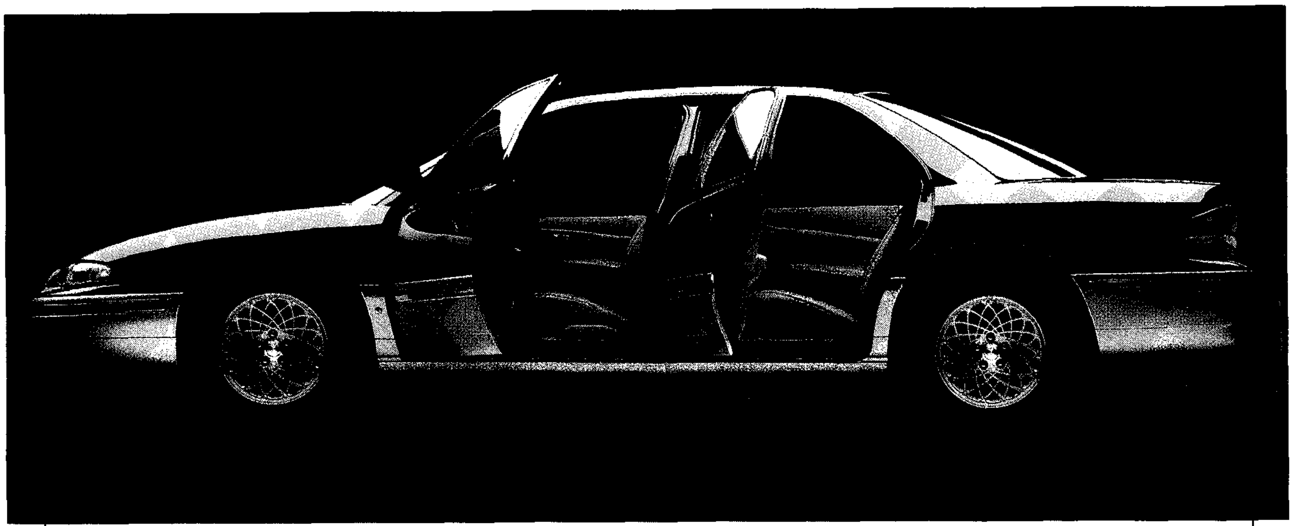

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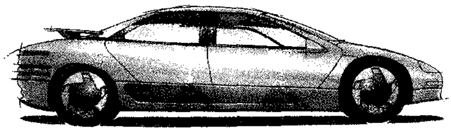

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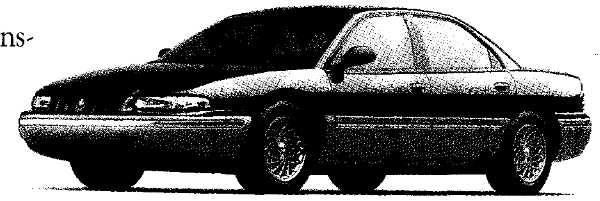

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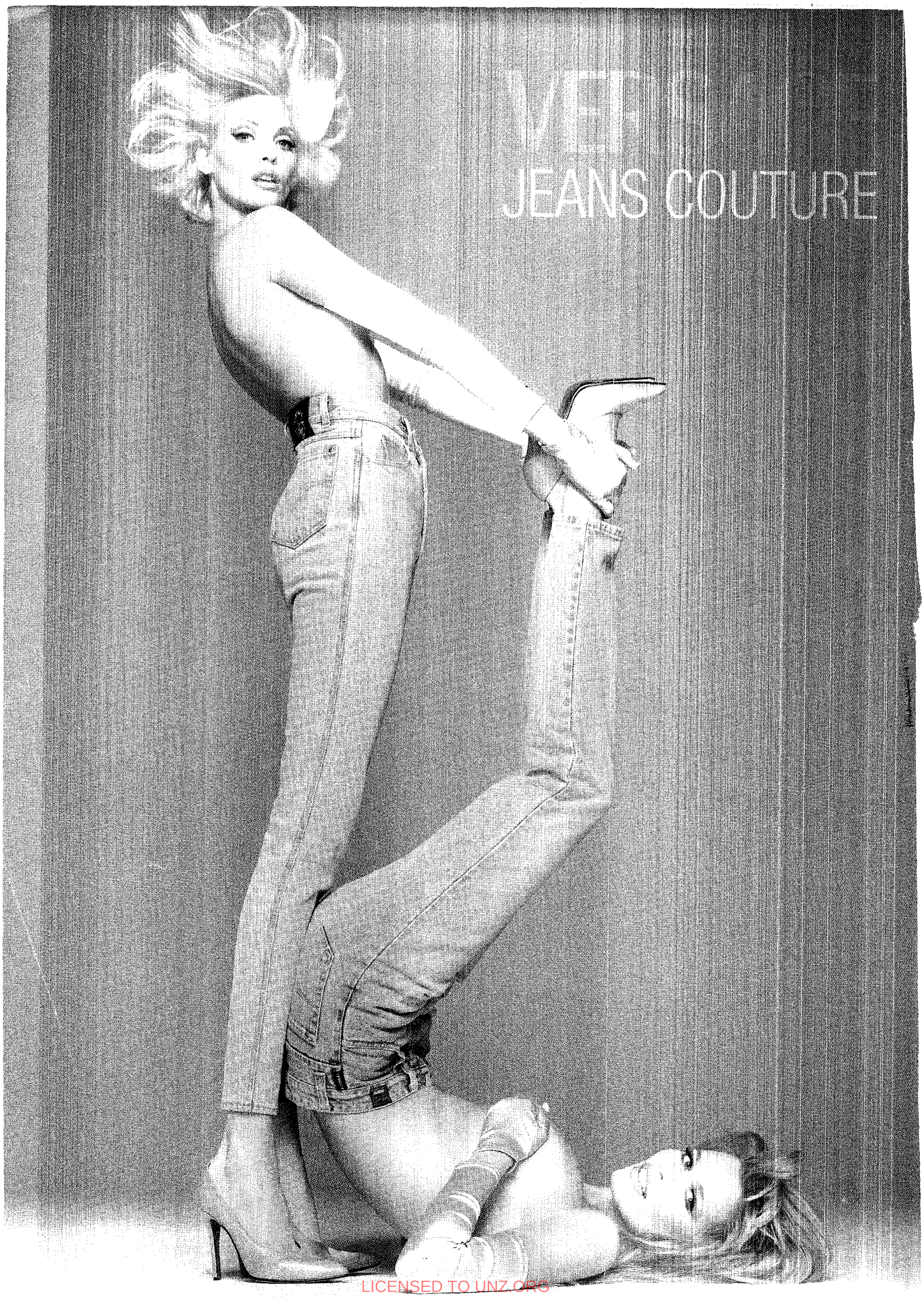
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